



# **The Indigenous Skills & Employment Program**

## **Consultation Outcomes Report**

26 October 2021

Prepared by Inside Policy for  
the National Indigenous Australians Agency

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## Acronyms and Definitions

### Acronyms

Acronym	Acronym Description
ACCO	Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation
ACCHO	Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisation
ATSICCO	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisation
CAP	Community Action Plan
CDP	Community Development Program
EDAEG	Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant
DIDO	Drive-in drive-out workers
FIFO	Fly-in fly-out workers
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
ISEP	Indigenous Skills and Employment Program
IT	Information Technology
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NFP	Not-for-profit organisation
NGO	Non-government organisation
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NREP	National Remote Engagement Program
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate
TO	Traditional Owner
VTEC	Vocational Training and Employment Centres
WHO	World Health Organisation

## Definitions

Key Term	Key Term Definition
Country	The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies defines Country as the term often used by Aboriginal people to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are connected. The term contains complex ideas about law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief, cultural practice, material sustenance, family and identity. <sup>1</sup>
Indigenous Australian	A person who is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted in their community as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Indigenous Australian is used throughout the report and refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and First Nations peoples/Australians.
Mob	A colloquial term used to identify a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people associated with a particular place or Country, and to connect and identify who an Aboriginal person is, where they are from, their family, clan or wider Aboriginal community group.
NIAA Regions	The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) has a network of regions and offices nationally. <sup>2</sup>
Service Provider	An organisation engaged by the Commonwealth to deliver services related to employment programs for Indigenous communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), [What is Country?](#), AIATSIS, 2021, accessed 8 October 2021.

<sup>2</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), [Regional Office Addresses](#), NIAA, 2021, accessed 8 October 2021.

## Acknowledgements

Inside Policy acknowledges the First Nations on which we live and work, as well as the many First Nations on which these consultations were held. We pay our respects to the Elders, past, present and emerging of these Nations. We thank them for their ongoing custodianship of land, waters, air and all aspects of Country and remind ourselves that it always was and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.

Inside Policy acknowledges the contribution of the staff of the NIAA Economic Policy and Programs Group and the staff across the NIAA regional offices nationally. Without their assistance and guidance, these consultations could not have taken place.

We also acknowledge and thank each person who took time out of their busy lives to take part in the consultation process, and for sharing their experience and expertise. Without them, work such as this cannot happen. We are grateful for their rich and diverse contributions.

This report uses the language as expressed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other participants and is included here to ensure that the authenticity of their voices is captured in these pages.

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

In 2021, the Australian Government announced the development of the new Indigenous Skills and Employment Program (the ISEP) as part of the Indigenous Skills and Jobs Advancement package to improve economic, social and education outcomes for Indigenous Australians. The ISEP will replace three programs from 1 July 2022: Vocational Training and Employment Centres (VTEC), Tailored Assistance Employment Grants (TAEG) and the Employment Parity Initiative (EPI).

The ISEP design will be based on the need to:

- Address specific barriers to employment at the regional and local levels;
- Work with local communities to identify existing and emerging engagement and employment opportunities;
- Respond to emerging regional labour market needs and opportunities for both job seekers and businesses;
- Target specific cohorts of Indigenous Australians based on data and evidence, supplemented with local knowledge and need; and
- Support employers to understand and realise the potential of the Indigenous workforce.<sup>3</sup>

NIAA engaged Inside Policy to conduct a series of roundtables with stakeholders and to analysis written submissions to its discussion paper in August and September 2021.

A total of 939 people took part in the roundtables and 62 written submissions were received from Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs), Traditional Owner groups and organisations, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Indigenous businesses, employment service providers, education and training service providers, private businesses, industry, trade and union groups, universities, non-government organisations and not-for-profit organisations.

## Methodology

The consultations included:

- 53 roundtables held across NIAA's regions as well as two national sessions as follows:
  - 18 face to face roundtables and Town Hall meetings
  - 28 online regional roundtables
  - 5 roundtables that combined people attending in person and an online facilitator
  - 2 virtual public Question and Answer sessions run by NIAA (outcomes not included here).
- The analysis of 62 written submissions to NIAA's ISEP Discussion Paper.

The two types of consultation activities were directed by two sets of questions developed by NIAA for the written submissions and with Inside Policy for the Roundtables and Town Hall meetings. These two sets are outlined below.

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<sup>3</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), [Indigenous Skills and Employment Program \(ISEP\)](#), NIAA, 2021, Australian Government, accessed 23 September 2021.

Consultation Activity	Discussion Questions
Roundtables and Town Hall meetings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the current state of a jobseeker in your region (or industry)?</li> <li>2. What is the current state of opportunities in your region (or at the national level)?</li> <li>3. What is the desired future state for jobseekers in your region (or nationally)?</li> </ol>
Written Submissions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How should the ISEP work alongside the new employment services model and the new remote engagement program to build work-ready skills and connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to rewarding, sustainable jobs?</li> <li>2. How could IAS investment be designed to be more flexible and responsive at the regional level, and better meet the needs of the community for Indigenous jobseekers and employers?</li> <li>3. How should results of the new ISEP program be measured, monitored and evaluated to ensure investment contributes to closing the gap in employment outcomes?</li> <li>4. How can we embed shared decision-making in community-based workforce planning?</li> <li>5. How can the ISEP encourage potential employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to provide safe and culturally appropriate work environments? How can employers better value the skills and perspectives of Indigenous employees?</li> <li>6. How should the ISEP consider a local focus?</li> </ol>

A thematic approach was used to consider the collected information. This provided flexibility in a national consultation to allow for the inclusion of findings and insights from particular geographic areas. All major themes, findings and insights were cross-checked using separate research teams to ensure consistency. The information collected from written submissions was first coded and organised using an analysis software program. Submissions were read several times and coded against the six Discussion Questions and also to include insights from responses that were outside the question reach. Across all the information collected, the themes, findings, and insights identified were double-checked to make sure they were consistent.

## Limitations

The following limitations affected collection of feedback from Roundtable and Town Hall meetings:

- COVID-19 restrictions.
- Technical difficulties affecting online activities.
- Reluctance of some participants to “speak for” Indigenous jobseekers.
- The need for flexibility in structuring roundtable questions to ensure what was being asked was clear for participants.

## Findings and Insights

Key insights from the consultation findings are set out below, organised by key themes:

### *Addressing barriers*

#### **Insight 1:**

#### **Addressing social barriers experienced by Indigenous jobseekers and employees is a strong determinant of long-term successful careers**

There is a set of key social barriers that exist across geographic locations that act as significant barriers to employment and retention for Indigenous Australians, in line with the recognised social determinants of health. These social barriers are foundational and should be addressed in parallel with employment-specific program design.

#### **Insight 2: The ISEP should aim to address entrenched or 'wicked' problems that continue to create Indigenous employment barriers in locally specific ways**

Part of the ISEP design could include innovative approaches to long standing problems facing Indigenous jobseekers. Such approaches could be developed within the specific contexts of local Indigenous communities, and in collaboration with and through co-design solutions involving Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and other community representatives.

### *Place-based approach*

#### **Insight 4: The ISEP should be flexible, place-based, community-led and client-focused.**

The ISEP should be flexible, support local approaches, and avoid 'one size fits all' funding arrangements. Within the context of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, participants emphasised the importance of NIAA undertaking collaboration on community-led and -designed solutions to achieve outcomes for Indigenous jobseekers appropriate to specific cultural and regional contexts.

#### **Insight 5: The ISEP should promote local, place-based training that is reflective of specific social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the regions**

Employment programs under the ISEP should incorporate culturally specific training and education pathways that reflect the community in which they are based. This includes flexibility around how services are delivered, linkages to employment opportunities in the region, support services delivered in language appropriate to the community, and increased funding to provide ongoing assistance beyond the current standard of 26-weeks.

#### **Insight 7: The ISEP should recognise that structural challenges exist in remote communities that impede the growth of local jobs markets.**

Some remote communities may lack a genuine local economy. A responsive, flexibly designed ISEP that allows for local solutions could address these structural challenges in innovative ways that are community led and supported by industry and government.

### *Co-designed and community-led approaches*

#### **Insight 10: The ISEP design and implementation should include Indigenous Australians and communities as co-designers and partners in specific local contexts.**

For the ISEP to achieve success, Indigenous Australians and organisations need to be in deep collaboration with government and decision-makers at the local level. Increased funding for ongoing service provision that recognises local and cultural contexts regarding employment, training and relationships between industry and government was considered vital by stakeholders.

**Insight 3: The ISEP should be flexible, designed from the community-level up and able to respond to regional needs**

Allowing for greater flexibility in program design to support local and regional solutions designed with and by Indigenous communities is essential in addressing impediments to Indigenous employment. The ISEP should allow for the ability to incorporate collaborative approaches to provide supports at the local level for Indigenous jobseekers, and for issues pertinent to specific regions – including key cohorts that need extra assistance – to be addressed in collaboration with ACCOs, government and employers to ensure local solutions are created and supported.

**Insight 15: Indigenous community-led definitions of local viewed as key to the ISEP success.**

What was considered 'local' for Indigenous communities, ACCOs, and Traditional Owner groups may look very different to the regional approach of both mainstream employers and government. The former's conception of community and locality should have primary choice in the construction of service delivery boundaries.

***Flexibility***

**Insight 9: The ISEP should invest in local ACCOs and Indigenous-specific employment services through flexible and accessible funding arrangements**

Local ACCOs and Indigenous specific employment services should be the key mechanism (or conduit) for the delivery of the ISEP. Further resourcing of ACCOs and local Indigenous employment services would result in strengthening of relationships between Indigenous communities, employers, service providers, and government in locally and culturally specific ways

**Insight 12: The ISEP could address the future for Indigenous employment through a lens of social, structural and strategic approaches to deliver outcomes as well as ensuring flexibility in program design to respond to non-homogenous requirements at the local and regional levels**

The ISEP should allow for the ability for address social, structural and strategic issues and opportunities in a flexible way to allow for place-based responses that can adapt to the specific requirements for a particular community or region.

## *Workplace safety*

### **Insight 6: Ensuring and positively obligating cultural safety in the workplace should be a critical feature of the ISEP**

Building cultural safety in the workplace is critical to successful outcomes of the new ISEP. This includes positive obligations on employers to make workplaces culturally safe, a view that was strongly expressed by industry leaders. Stakeholders agreed that ACCOs and Indigenous communities must play a key role in this and that employers require support, training, accreditation, and positive obligations to develop such measures within local Indigenous community contexts.

### **Insight 14: Culturally safe workplaces need to be 'ready' for Indigenous employees and encouraged and obligated through the ISEP and Federal Government mechanisms**

Cultural safety and capability measures need to be facilitated by all key stakeholders – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and controlled-organisations, employers, service providers, and NIAA – to ensure culturally safe and competent workplaces for Indigenous employees to successfully sustain jobs and careers.

## *Support for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs)*

### **Insight 8: The ISEP should prioritise strategic coordination and collaboration at the regional level that supports ACCOs as partners and collaborators coupled with higher levels of employer accountability**

A regional strategic approach is called for in the new ISEP that encourages collaboration across ACCOs and Indigenous communities, government, and industry to build regional solutions and programs to achieve successful outcomes.

### **Insight 11: The ISEP should embed shared decision making by supporting and funding ACCOs in the delivery of Indigenous-specific employment services**

ACCOs can act as key partners and co-designers of locally and culturally specific employment service provision for current and future Indigenous employees. The primary way of achieving this under the ISEP is a government-funded and supported 'one-stop shop' service in each region that enables collaboration between all major stakeholders.

## *Measuring impact*

### **Insight 13: Indigenous-owned and -controlled data gathering and evaluation in local contexts and culturally specific ways is vital for measuring the impact of the ISEP**

For the ISEP to have maximum impact, the way in which 'success' is both understood and measured should be determined by Indigenous communities. NIAA could provide support and training to ensure 'person-centred' evaluation is able to be undertaken by ACCOs and Indigenous-controlled employment services to best reflect Indigenous employee and community needs and aspirations.

## Introduction

Inside Policy was engaged in August 2021 by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) to design, undertake, and report on a series of national consultations to inform the development of the new Indigenous Skills and Employment Program (the ISEP). Inside Policy was also engaged to synthesise the key findings of the written submissions to the public discussion paper for the ISEP.

As part of the Indigenous Skills and Jobs Advancement package to improve economic, social and education outcomes for Indigenous Australians, the Australian Government announced a commitment in the 2021–22 Budget to develop the ISEP replacing the Vocational Training and Employment Centres (VTEC), Tailored Assistance Employment Grants (TAEG) and the Employment Parity Initiative (EPI) from 1 July 2022.

Driven by the employment and training targets in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the ISEP will contribute to closing the employment gap through Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) investment that is flexible and locally informed. The ISEP will interface with the changed mainstream Employment Services Model which will commence in 2022.

The ISEP is being co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in consultation with key stakeholders. Its design will be based on the need to:

- Address specific barriers to employment at the regional and local levels
- Work with local communities to identify existing and emerging engagement and employment opportunities
- Respond to emerging regional labour market needs and opportunities for both job seekers and businesses
- Target specific cohorts of Indigenous Australians based on data and evidence, supplemented with local knowledge and need
- Support employers to understand and realise the potential of the Indigenous workforce.<sup>4</sup>

## Purpose of this report

This report documents the findings and insights from the ISEP consultation activities which included a series of regional and national roundtables and written submissions. This report:

- Details the consultations undertaken, the findings from these activities and their implications for the design of the ISEP,
- Outlines the consistent themes and insights from Roundtables and Town Hall Meetings, and
- Details the findings of the written submissions to the ISEP Discussion Paper.

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<sup>4</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), [Indigenous Skills and Employment Program \(ISEP\)](#), NIAA, 2021, Australian Government, accessed 23 September 2021.

## Structure of this report

This report follows the structure outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1: Report structure**

Section	Contents
Acknowledgements	Acknowledging Country, and the participants and NIAA staff who contributed to this report.
Executive Summary	Overarching summary of the consultation activities, methodology and findings and insights.
Introduction	Overview of the purpose and structure of the report.
Methodology	Outline of methodology, locations, participants, and the questions used in consultation activities.
Findings	Discussion of the findings across consultation activity type and questions.
Key Insights	Detailed insights from the data analysis for future use by NIAA in the co-design process for the ISEP program.
Appendices	The following appendices accompany this report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Regional roundtable agenda example</li><li>B. Roundtable participant lists</li><li>C. Discussion Paper written submissions list</li></ul>

## Methodology

In July 2021, in the context of the Government's commitment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the National the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, announced a public consultation process for developing and co-designing the ISEP. The process was to include:

- National roundtable discussions,
- Roundtable discussions and Town Hall meetings in metropolitan, regional and remote locations, and
- Inviting and receiving written submissions from the public on the ISEP discussion paper.<sup>5</sup>

In August 2021, Inside Policy was engaged to conduct roundtable discussions and town hall meetings (Town Halls) and analyse the written submissions.

Outlined below are the methods used to undertake the regional and national roundtables as well as to analyse the written submissions.

### Regional and national roundtables and Town Halls

The roundtables and Town Halls focused on understanding stakeholder perspectives of how the ISEP could be designed to best support Indigenous jobseekers. This involved facilitating discussions on the current challenges and barriers jobseekers face, the current or potential employment and training opportunities for Indigenous jobseekers at the regional level, and the future possibilities for Indigenous employment success.

The roundtables achieved this by asking three overarching questions:

1. What is the current state of a jobseeker in your region?
2. What is the current state of opportunities in your region?
3. What is the desired future state for jobseekers in your region?

Initially questions one and two were reversed, but after several roundtables were conducted it became apparent that the quality of responses were not appropriate when participants were asked to nominate opportunities ahead of challenges, barriers and needs. The majority of roundtables used the questions as outlined above. However, it is worth noting that some participants felt they were not in a position to provide responses on behalf of Indigenous jobseekers regarding their training and job aspirations.

A copy of the regional roundtable agendas is included at Appendix A. A full list of the sub-questions is included below in Findings.

The nature of the Town Hall and roundtable sessions varied across the regions to respond to regional understanding of participants' capacities and availability. This flexibility aside, Town Halls tended to:

- Be shorter (between 1.5 and 2 hours)
- Be designed for larger numbers of participants, and
- Target community members and community-based organisations.

### Number and type of sessions held

A total of 53 sessions were held in various locations and by various modes as outlined below:

- 18 face-to-face Roundtables and Town Halls were conducted where it was safe and lawful to do so in accordance with COVID-19 restrictions.

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<sup>5</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), *Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (ISEP): Discussion Paper*, NIAA, 2021, Australian Government.

- 28 roundtable discussions were facilitated virtually where local COVID-19 restrictions prohibited either the facilitator travelling to the community and / or people gathering in person.
- 5 hybrid consultations were conducted with participants attending both virtually and face-to-face.
- 2 virtual Question and Answer sessions open to the general public were run by NIAA (views from these sessions are not included in this report as they were not discursive).

**Table 2: Regional Roundtables and Town Halls were held in the following communities:**

State/Territory	NIAA Region	Location
New South Wales	Eastern New South Wales	Empowered Communities
		NSW North Coast
		NSW South Coast
		Sydney
	Western New South Wales	Wagga Wagga
Northern Territory	Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Groote Eylandt
		Maningrida
		Nhulunbuy
	Central Australia	Alice Springs
		Tennant Creek
Top End and Tiwi Islands	Darwin	
Queensland	North Queensland	Cairns
		Mackay
		Mount Isa
		Townsville
	South Queensland	Brisbane
		Rockhampton
		Toowoomba
		Woorabinda
South Australia	South Australia	Adelaide
		Port Augusta
Tasmania	Victoria-Tasmania	Hobart
Victoria	Victoria-Tasmania	Bendigo
		Victoria
Western Australia	Greater Western Australia	Goldfields
		Greater Western Australia
		Midwest
		Perth

State/Territory	NIAA Region	Location
		Pilbara
		Southwest
	Kimberley	Broome
		Derby
		Kununurra

Roundtables and Town Halls ranged between 1.5 hours and 2.5 hours in length. Depending on the number attending the session, participants explored the consultation questions through a mix of individual, small group and large group exercises.

### Participant profile

Participant numbers for each session ranged from five to 45. A total of 939 individuals from 11 NIAA regions and nationally took part in the regional and national roundtables.<sup>6</sup>

Participants included service providers, Indigenous communities and community-controlled organisations, employers, industry peaks, representatives from Federal, state and territory, and local governments, academics and a philanthropic foundation.

The NIAA regional and national consultations were attended as follows:

**Table 3: Total number of Roundtable participants**

NIAA Region	Number of participants
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	45
Top End and Tiwi Islands Region	42
Central Australia	40
Greater Western Australia Region	57
Kimberley Region	29
South Queensland Region	108
North Queensland Region	109
Eastern New South Wales Region	141
Western New South Wales Region	31
Victoria – Tasmania Region	100
South Australia Region	148
National	22
National Empowered Communities	12
National – Q and A sessions	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>939</b>

Further details about the individual consultations and participant numbers can be found in Appendix B.

## Reporting

Inside Policy collected session data through:

- Recorded audio from all roundtable sessions, wherever possible
- Completed participant worksheets, and
- A scribe recording the proceedings, wherever possible.

The session facilitator reviewed the scribe's notes before their inclusion in the individual session report and thematic analysis for this report.

An individual session report was completed to summarise the key findings from each session and provided to NIAA. In addition, a weekly summary report was also provided to NIAA outlining details of the consultations conducted and emerging themes.

### Method of analysing the roundtable and Town Hall data

The data collected across the consultation roundtables was analysed using a thematic approach to assess participant contributions. One of the advantages of a thematic analysis is the flexibility it provides which is useful in a national data collection scenario given the potential for geographically specific key findings and insights. Two rounds of analysis using separate researchers was implemented to address any potential researcher bias.

The individual roundtable session report output was analysed against a key set of criteria:

- Location indicators
- Regional / local employment market indicators, and
- Stakeholder type.

Major themes and findings were presented and discussed in an internal Inside Policy ideation session on 20 September 2021, and with the NIAA ISEP national office team in draft form on 24 September 2021. This ensured validity and reliability of the initial analysis and also resulted in the development of coherent themes emerging from the data relative to the aims of the project, while also allowing for in-depth discussions regarding the complexity of the resulting findings.

All subsequent themes, findings, and insights were cross-checked by the Inside Policy team prior to submission of this report to ensure consistency and complexity of analysis was achieved.

### Written Submissions to the ISEP Discussion Paper

The Minister's announcement also included inviting and receiving written submissions from the public on the ISEP Discussion Paper.<sup>7</sup> The submission period was open from 13 July 2021 to 10 September 2021. The ISEP Discussion Paper can be found [here](#).

The ISEP Discussion Paper asked the public six Discussion Questions on the future of IAS funded Indigenous-specific employment programs:

1. How should the Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (the ISEP) work alongside the new employment services model and the new remote engagement program to build work-ready skills and connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to rewarding, sustainable jobs?
2. How could IAS investment be designed to be more flexible and responsive at the regional level, and better meet the needs of the community for Indigenous jobseekers and employers?
3. How should results of the new ISEP program be measured, monitored and evaluated to ensure investment contributes to closing the gap in employment outcomes?
4. How can we embed shared-decision making in community-based workforce planning?

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<sup>7</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), *Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (ISEP): Discussion Paper*, NIAA, 2021, Australian Government.

5. How can the ISEP encourage potential employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to provide safe and culturally appropriate work environments? How can employers better value the skills and perspectives of Indigenous employees?
6. How should the ISEP consider a local focus?

As part of the same process, NIAA sought stakeholder views “on any other relevant issues raised in [the] discussion paper” to inform government of “views of future investment in Indigenous-specific employment programs through the IAS”.

### **Profile of written submissions received**

The 62 written submissions received by NIAA in response to the ISEP Discussion Paper including representation of:

- Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs)
- Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations (ACCHOs)
- Traditional Owner groups and organisations (TOs)
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs)
- Aboriginal-owned businesses
- Employment service providers
- Education and training service providers
- Small-to-large private businesses
- Industry, trade, and union representative groups
- Universities
- Non-government organisations (NGOs)
- Not-for-profit (NFP) organisations.

### **Method of analysing the written submissions**

In September 2021 Inside Policy were provided with 62 written submissions received by NIAA in response to NIAA’s ISEP Discussion Paper. A qualitative thematic analysis approach was used to assess the contents of each submission. One of the advantages of a thematic analysis for a large corpus of text is the level of flexibility it provides. Here, such an approach was useful for developing core themes, recommendations, and insights at a general or national level, whilst also allowing for case studies and regional differentiation to emerge and reveal deviations across the dataset.

Initial coding and the organising of data was undertaken using qualitative data analysis software (NVivo). All submissions were read multiple times and coded both deductively using NIAA’s six ISEP Discussion Questions and key themes within the Discussion Paper and inductively to include insights arising directly from each response often outside the specific scope of those questions. All researchers on the project were provided with both the 62 written responses, and the core themes emerging from the data exported from NVivo (raw, blinded without coding/notes), to ensure triangulation of our analysis occurred from its earliest stages.

The major themes and findings were presented to the internal and NIAA sessions as outlined above. Again, all subsequent themes, findings, and insights were cross-checked to ensure consistency and complexity of analysis was achieved.

Submissions are referenced in footnote format throughout the findings of the written submissions, and if quoted, page numbers are provided. Please note that four respondents requested anonymity in their responses.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations emerged throughout this extensive consultation and data analysis process including:

- The ongoing prevalence and risk of COVID-19 across Australia and resulting border closures meant that consultations in some locations (namely NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, some

Queensland, and NT locations) took place virtually. In comparison to face-to-face sessions, a virtually conducted group session can limit participation as well as the breadth and nuance of feedback received.

- A lack of clear audio recording in some sessions resulted in less detailed scribe notes for subsequent analysis.
- The Woorabinda session encountered technical difficulties at the start of the session. The regional team and facilitator made the decision to continue the session with regional staff facilitating and taking notes. The Inside Policy facilitator and scribe were unable to join the meeting and subsequently there are some limitations in the data collected, in particular early analysis and theming.
- In the early stages of consultations, it became clear that Discussion Question 2 – “What is the current state of opportunities in your region?” – was used as the first question and did not resonate with participants. As mentioned above, the decision was made in consultation with NIAA to change the order so that this became question two for the remaining roundtables to improve data quality.
- Some participants felt they were not in a position to provide responses to roundtable Discussion Question 2 on behalf of Indigenous jobseekers regarding their training and job aspirations.
- Analysis of the consultation sessions is presented here by region. This analytical decision results from consultations being held on a regional basis, and thus means our data cannot be disaggregated or clearly separated by key demographic indicators without breaching anonymity.
- The majority of the 62 written submissions responded directly to the six discussion questions as outlined in NIAA’s ISEP Discussion Paper. As the level of detail varied between each submission, best efforts were made to ensure consistency in thematic analysis.
- The reliability and validity of written submission results was ensured through cross-checking data and analysis by the Inside Policy team.

## Key Insights

Across both the roundtable sessions and written submissions to the ISEP Discussion Paper a set of 15 clear insights can be drawn to assist the framing of the new ISEP.

These insights are grouped by key themes as follows:

### *Addressing barriers*

#### **Insight 1:**

#### **Addressing social barriers experienced by Indigenous jobseekers and employees is a strong determinant of long-term successful careers**

There is a set of key social barriers that exist across geographic locations that act as significant barriers to employment and retention for Indigenous Australians, in line with the recognised social determinants of health. These social barriers are foundational and should be addressed in parallel with employment-specific program design.

#### **Insight 2: The ISEP should aim to address entrenched or 'wicked' problems that continue to create Indigenous employment barriers in locally specific ways**

Part of the ISEP design could include innovative approaches to long standing problems facing Indigenous jobseekers. Such approaches could be developed within the specific contexts of local Indigenous communities, and in collaboration with and through co-design solutions involving Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and other community representatives.

### *Place-based approach*

#### **Insight 4: The ISEP should be flexible, place-based, community-led and client-focused.**

The ISEP should be flexible, support local approaches, and avoid 'one size fits all' funding arrangements. Within the context of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, participants emphasised the importance of NIAA undertaking collaboration on community-led and -designed solutions to achieve outcomes for Indigenous jobseekers appropriate to specific cultural and regional contexts.

#### **Insight 5: The ISEP should promote local, place-based training that is reflective of specific social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the regions**

Employment programs under the ISEP should incorporate culturally specific training and education pathways that reflect the community in which they are based. This includes flexibility around how services are delivered, linkages to employment opportunities in the region, support services delivered in language appropriate to the community, and increased funding to provide ongoing assistance beyond the current standard of 26-weeks.

#### **Insight 7: The ISEP should recognise that structural challenges exist in remote communities that impede the growth of local jobs markets.**

Some remote communities may lack a genuine local economy. A responsive, flexibly designed ISEP that allows for local solutions could address these structural challenges in innovative ways that are community led and supported by industry and government.

### *Co-designed and community-led approaches*

**Insight 10: The ISEP design and implementation should include Indigenous Australians and communities as co-designers and partners in specific local contexts.**

For the ISEP to achieve success, Indigenous Australians and organisations need to be in deep collaboration with government and decision-makers at the local level. Increased funding for ongoing service provision that recognises local and cultural contexts regarding employment, training and relationships between industry and government was considered vital by stakeholders.

**Insight 3: The ISEP should be flexible, designed from the community-level up and able to respond to regional needs**

Allowing for greater flexibility in program design to support local and regional solutions designed with and by Indigenous communities is essential in addressing impediments to Indigenous employment. The ISEP should allow for the ability to incorporate collaborative approaches to provide supports at the local level for Indigenous jobseekers, and for issues pertinent to specific regions – including key cohorts that need extra assistance – to be addressed in collaboration with ACCOs, government and employers to ensure local solutions are created and supported.

**Insight 15: Indigenous community-led definitions of local viewed as key to the ISEP success.**

What was considered 'local' for Indigenous communities, ACCOs, and Traditional Owner groups may look very different to the regional approach of both mainstream employers and government. The former's conception of community and locality should have primary choice in the construction of service delivery boundaries.

*Flexibility*

**Insight 9: The ISEP should invest in local ACCOs and Indigenous-specific employment services through flexible and accessible funding arrangements**

Local ACCOs and Indigenous specific employment services should be the key mechanism (or conduit) for the delivery of the ISEP. Further resourcing of ACCOs and local Indigenous employment services would result in strengthening of relationships between Indigenous communities, employers, service providers, and government in locally and culturally specific ways

**Insight 12: The ISEP could address the future for Indigenous employment through a lens of social, structural and strategic approaches to deliver outcomes as well as ensuring flexibility in program design to respond to non-homogenous requirements at the local and regional levels**

The ISEP should allow for the ability for address social, structural and strategic issues and opportunities in a flexible way to allow for place-based responses that can adapt to the specific requirements for a particular community or region.

## *Workplace safety*

### **Insight 6: Ensuring and positively obligating cultural safety in the workplace should be a critical feature of the ISEP**

Building cultural safety in the workplace is critical to successful outcomes of the new ISEP. This includes positive obligations on employers to make workplaces culturally safe, a view that was strongly expressed by industry leaders. Stakeholders agreed that ACCOs and Indigenous communities must play a key role in this and that employers require support, training, accreditation, and positive obligations to develop such measures within local Indigenous community contexts.

### **Insight 14: Culturally safe workplaces need to be 'ready' for Indigenous employees and encouraged and obligated through the ISEP and Federal Government mechanisms**

Cultural safety and capability measures need to be facilitated by all key stakeholders – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and controlled-organisations, employers, service providers, and NIAA – to ensure culturally safe and competent workplaces for Indigenous employees to successfully sustain jobs and careers.

## *Support for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs)*

### **Insight 8: The ISEP should prioritise strategic coordination and collaboration at the regional level that supports ACCOs as partners and collaborators coupled with higher levels of employer accountability**

A regional strategic approach is called for in the new ISEP that encourages collaboration across ACCOs and Indigenous communities, government, and industry to build regional solutions and programs to achieve successful outcomes.

### **Insight 11: The ISEP should embed shared decision making by supporting and funding ACCOs in the delivery of Indigenous-specific employment services**

ACCOs can act as key partners and co-designers of locally and culturally specific employment service provision for current and future Indigenous employees. The primary way of achieving this under the ISEP is a government-funded and supported 'one-stop shop' service in each region that enables collaboration between all major stakeholders.

## *Measuring impact*

### **Insight 13: Indigenous-owned and -controlled data gathering and evaluation in local contexts and culturally specific ways is vital for measuring the impact of the ISEP**

For the ISEP to have maximum impact, the way in which 'success' is both understood and measured should be determined by Indigenous communities. NIAA could provide support and training to ensure 'person-centred' evaluation is able to be undertaken by ACCOs and Indigenous-controlled employment services to best reflect Indigenous employee and community needs and aspirations.

## Findings

This section reports the detailed finding from the:

- Roundtables and Town Halls, and
- Written submissions.

### Roundtables & Town Halls: Detailed Findings

As noted in the Methodology section, at the commencement of the roundtables Questions One and Two were reversed but then swapped after a small group of roundtables suggested the data quality unsuitable when participants were asked to nominate opportunities ahead of challenges, barriers and needs.

Despite the significant differences in geographic locations covered in the roundtables, there was a very high level of consistency in participant views. Where there is region-specific data, this will be attributed to the region in question.

### Discussion Question 1: Understanding jobseekers in the region (Challenges, Barriers, Needs)

With respect to understanding jobseekers in the region (challenges, barriers, needs) participants were asked:

- A. What are the most common barriers to employment for job seekers in this region?
- B. What might be stopping people from staying in employment long-term once they have secured a job?
- C. What is needed to intervene at critical points?
- D. What do employers need to improve to provide safe and culturally appropriate work environments?
- E. Are there specific cohorts (incl cohorts not currently jobseekers e.g. entry level workers looking for promotions; school leavers considering work/study) you see needing greater assistance than others in your region?

Responses to this question ranged from social and access barriers to Indigenous employment and general principles of policy design for the ISEP through to specific suggestions of how the new program should operate. The commonality among responses was the need for a flexible program able to balance a place-based, Indigenous community-led approach to find solutions to entrenched problems with the requisite for strategic co-ordination across stakeholders at the regional level.

#### A. What are the most common barriers to employment for job seekers in this region?

There is a key set of foundational circumstances related to the lives and experiences of Indigenous Australians that act as the social determinants of Indigenous employment that must be acknowledged and addressed before genuine changes can be made

In response to this question all participant groups, regardless of geographic location, identified a set of key social barriers in line with recognised social determinants of health that impact the ability of Indigenous Australians to enter or remain in the employment market. The World Health Organisation (WHO) describes social determinants of health as:

'(T)he circumstances in which people grow, live, work, and age, and the systems put in place to deal with illness. The conditions in which people live and die are, in turn, shaped by political, social, and economic forces'.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> CSDH (Commission on Social Determinants of Health) 2008. [Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health. Final report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health](#). Geneva: World Health Organization.

According to the WHO, social inequalities and disadvantage are the main reason for avoidable and unfair differences across groups in society. In 2003, the WHO Europe suggested that the social determinants of health included:

- Socioeconomic position
- Early life
- Social exclusion
- Work
- Unemployment
- Social support
- Addiction
- Food
- Transportation.<sup>9</sup>

Factors related to Indigenous community functioning are also important determinants of Indigenous health and wellbeing. For Indigenous Australians, the social determinants of health also include factors such as cultural identity, family, participation in cultural activities and access to traditional lands.<sup>10</sup>

The key social barriers identified by participants are:

- Stable, appropriate housing
- Health, mental health and Alcohol and Other Drugs complexities (and potentially impacts of dual diagnoses)
- Literacy and numeracy, including language barriers (English as second or other language in remote / very remote communities and grasp of labour force language more generally)
- Lack of family and / or community support
- Self-esteem and confidence levels
- Intergenerational unemployment, intergenerational welfare dependency
- Transport / drivers' licenses
- Childcare
- A lack of understanding by employers and service providers of a participant's family and cultural obligations
- Family safety
- Identification documentation issues
- Criminal records.

### **Key Insight 1**

#### **Addressing social barriers experienced by Indigenous jobseekers and employees is a strong determinant of long-term successful careers**

There is a set of key social barriers that exist across geographic locations that act as significant barriers to employment and retention for Indigenous Australians, in line with the recognised social determinants of health. These social barriers are foundational and should be addressed in parallel with employment-specific program design.

<sup>9</sup> CSDH (Commission on Social Determinants of Health) 2008. [Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health. Final report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health](#). Geneva: World Health Organization.

<sup>10</sup> Australian Government, AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2020, Social determinants of health, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/social-determinants-of-health>

Despite a considerable body of programmatic work to date, there remains a set of entrenched employment access barriers that continue to impede Indigenous Australian's ability to enter and remain in employment that the ISEP must approach in conjunction with Indigenous communities and their organisations.

Across the country and regardless of stakeholder type, participants nominated a series of impediments to Indigenous Australians' access to employment that affect their capacity to engage with employment. These included:

- Job readiness: Job readiness continues to be an issue among Indigenous jobseekers regardless of location. While it must be acknowledged that this was predominantly an issue raised by non-Indigenous employers, it was also an issue for community members and ACCOs who cited the need for an Indigenous led policy approach.
- Traditional human resources / people and culture process and structures: The language and structures of recruitment continue to exclude Indigenous people, many of whom are unable to successfully navigate the language of job advertisements and selection criteria systems that may be unrealistic or restrictive, and to provide the required personal documentation.
- Access to information technology (IT): Across all locations, lack of IT access is common to Indigenous jobseekers. This may relate to equipment, where one laptop or computer may be shared across a household or further; insufficient data to regularly access the digital jobs market; access to WIFI due to cost or coverage; or sole reliance on a smart phone for all digital engagement for education or employment whether suitable or not.
- Lack of entry-level jobs for unskilled jobseekers to enter employment.
- Insufficient knowledge of available employment options resulting in a lack of exposure to diverse employment opportunities that in some circumstance can provide access to employment entry.

### ***Key Insight 2***

#### **The ISEP should aim to address entrenched or 'wicked' problems that continue to create Indigenous employment barriers in locally specific ways**

Part of the ISEP design could include innovative approaches to long standing problems facing Indigenous jobseekers. Such approaches could be developed within the specific contexts of local Indigenous communities, and in collaboration with and through co-design solutions involving Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and other community representatives.

The ISEP should incorporate place-based, culturally appropriate approaches to training and employment that draw skills from within community and are designed in partnership with ACCOs and local industry to facilitate realistic Indigenous jobseeker pathways

Participants advised that there are existing education and training gaps regardless of location that include an absence of Indigenous community-led design in partnership with local industry. Specific issues identified across locations included: employment initiatives not being localised and realistic for Indigenous jobseekers; a lack of local training options related to insufficient infrastructure and cross jurisdictional funding coordination, and a general lack of professional development which delegitimised career progression.

It was noted consistently across locations that a lack of locally available jobs does not support Indigenous peoples remaining on Country and in community, does not incorporate existing skills of Indigenous jobseekers critical for service delivery into communities, and leads to displacement issues due to the need to relocate to other regions.

The principles for the ISEP design should include Indigenous community control, flexibility, place-based, client centered approaches, suitable funding models and culturally safe methods to address existing program design issues that have acted as barriers to Indigenous employment outcomes

There is an absence of community control of program design, development and service delivery and a lack of 'co-design' processes. These remain subject to government control and have thus far failed to deliver Indigenous employment outcomes.

Participants felt strongly that a 'one size fits all' national programmatic approach has not worked and unanimously nominated a need for local and regional approaches in conjunction with approaches tailored to individual clients.

Many service providers who participated felt that funding models do not deliver Indigenous employment outcomes and identified tension between government funding requirements and delivery of programs that meet local needs. For example, retrospective trainee repayment models stop smaller organisations without the required cash flow (often ACCOs) from increasing trainee numbers and expanding capacity building.

It was clear from consultations that community representatives, ACCOs and Indigenous led providers believe that Indigenous-led organisations have a higher level of cultural safety than non-Indigenous organisations. Further, it was felt that many non-Indigenous providers do not use culturally appropriate methods, possess only basic local knowledge and that little effort is exerted in consulting with community to build understanding.

### **Key Insight 3**

#### **The ISEP should be flexible, designed from the community-level up and able to respond to regional needs**

Allowing for greater flexibility in program design to support local and regional solutions designed with and by Indigenous communities is essential in addressing impediments to Indigenous employment. The ISEP should allow for the ability to incorporate collaborative approaches to provide supports at the local level for Indigenous jobseekers, and for issues pertinent to specific regions – including key cohorts that need extra assistance – to be addressed in collaboration with ACCOs, government and employers to ensure local solutions are created and supported.

The ISEP should prioritise strategic coordination and collaboration at the regional level that supports ACCOs as partners and collaborators coupled with higher levels of employer accountability

Many participants highlighted the current national approach lacks a focus on regional strategies and coordination which has resulted in an absence of collaborative, strategic approaches and coordination at the local and regional levels across government, community, employers and service providers.

In many regions this has led to inappropriate training options that fail to result in employment, the inability of students and others to plan their training and education to lead to employment and long-term careers, and an industry reliance on non-Indigenous staff in remote areas and on fly-in fly-out (FIFO) or drive-in drive-out (DIDO) employees to fill positions.

Some participants cited the need to build the local and regional employment evidence base through improved data collection and coordination to underpin identification of, and responses to employer needs and employment pipeline development.

Related barriers included the general lack of support for career pathways and the need for programs transitioning Indigenous youth into professional/technical fields to support well-

remunerated, stable and sustainable career paths that lead to more Indigenous Australians in senior positions.

Further, the lack of Indigenous employment targets and employer accountability measures was a common theme across participants. It was strongly felt that under the new ISEP, the Indigenous workforce needs to become a government and industry priority backed by strategic targets and clear accountability mechanisms.

#### **Key Insight 4**

##### **The ISEP should be flexible, place-based, community-led and client-focused**

The ISEP should be flexible, support local approaches, and avoid 'one size fits all' funding arrangements. Within the context of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, participants emphasised the importance of NIAA undertaking collaboration on community-led and -designed solutions to achieve outcomes for Indigenous jobseekers appropriate to specific cultural and regional contexts.

#### **Divergent issues**

There were a small number of divergent issues raised by a small minority of participants that did not relate specifically to location. These were:

- Issues with government income support: Some participants raised issues with social security payments that can act as a barrier to jobseekers entering or remaining in the workforce. For example, when someone commences employment, it may affect Centrelink payments for their partner and act as a barrier for jobseeker retention.
- The impacts of COVID: The COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread disruption to economic and educational activity in some regions largely due to the restrictions imposed on businesses and individuals. Participants felt this has significantly impacted young Indigenous cohorts involved in workplace-based training in apprenticeships and traineeships. Alternatively, others saw COVID presented opportunities at the local / regional level.
- ACCOs unable to compete with government or private sector salaries: Some ACCOs raised concerns that after investing in supports and training for Indigenous jobseekers and existing staff they are unable to compete with the larger salaries offered by government and the private sector. This results in constantly losing experienced people from the community-controlled sector.

#### **B. What might be stopping people from staying in employment long term once they have secured a job?**

Employment programs that lack cultural specificity and needs, and pathways to employment impede Indigenous employment retention

In response to this question, participants nominated that education and training must be culturally and linguistically appropriate, place-based and linked to regional employment needs and opportunities. Participants noted that mentoring and support programs need to be culturally appropriate, flexible, and tailored to the jobseeker and it is important that Indigenous Australians can earn wages while undertaking training.

The need for more place-based training that is responsive to the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the region and its communities was raised by the majority of participants. Further, Indigenous participants identified the need for education and training that is culturally and

linguistically appropriate. Linguistic appropriateness included both developing training for those in remote communities who speak English as a second or other language as well as delivery in appropriate languages for Indigenous Australians.

Most participants spoke of a disconnect between training opportunities that are not linked to employment opportunities at the local and regional levels, leaving jobseekers with little or no access to employment.

A specific need nominated across participants for inclusion in the ISEP design is culturally appropriate and flexible mentoring and support programs that allow for service providers to tailor an individualised program to meet jobseeker needs. In addition, there was strong support for provision of mentoring and other supports beyond job placement or the 26-week mark and as needed on an ongoing basis to support retention and career planning.

Participants also felt the need to earn a wage while training on the job was a central issue and the lack of adequate income support for those undertaking training often acts as a disincentive for Indigenous Australians.

#### **Key Insight 5**

##### **The ISEP should promote local, place-based training that is reflective of specific social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the regions**

Employment programs under the ISEP should incorporate culturally specific training and education pathways that reflect the community in which they are based. This includes flexibility around how services are delivered, linkages to employment opportunities in the region, support services delivered in language appropriate to the community, and increased funding to provide ongoing assistance beyond the current standard of 26-weeks.

### **C. What is needed to intervene at critical points?**

The school to work transition is a critical juncture and an early focus on younger students is required

Participants noted that the school to work transition continues to be a pressure point. Programs that target senior students should also focus on younger students in early high school years to allow for career path planning and subject choices.

Students require more exposure to regional industry and potential careers, improved access to work experience and access to information and knowledge about entering employment at a much earlier age. This is of particular importance to counteract intergenerational unemployment.

Participants from areas with significant numbers of early school leavers (specifically remote and very remote areas and communities without a local high school) included this cohort as a priority group in any school to work transition program design and delivery.

### **D. What do employers need to improve to provide safe and culturally appropriate work environments?**

The ISEP should include a focus on the provision of Indigenous-led supports for industry to build accountable, proactive and flexible workplaces to ensure cultural safety

Participants agreed that there is a general lack of cultural safety in workplaces nationally. Employers do not yet understand cultural safety, the cultural obligations of Indigenous employees or the skills they bring to the workplace. Some participants felt that employers seeking Indigenous Australians to “tick boxes” or meet Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) requirements often lack the cultural awareness and understanding to retain them.

Many participants felt that racism, bias and discrimination in the workplace includes entrenched ideas about Indigenous Australians and their capacity, and that there is a lack of robust and appropriate responses. The lack of employer understanding and recognition of traditional and cultural knowledge and obligations of Indigenous Australians results in an absence of flexibility and understanding. This leads to contradictions and tension between standard business practices and Indigenous culture, and a lack of understanding by non-Indigenous workers of Indigenous cultural practices and obligations as distinct to those of non-Indigenous employees.

Workplaces that are not culturally safe lead to a devaluing of Indigenous employees and the skills they bring to the workplace and a lack of Aboriginal representation, particularly at senior levels. This contributes to an absence of Indigenous guidance and leadership in the workplace.

Some remote area participants saw the need for engagement of the broader family network. More broadly, participants identified access to supports such as culturally appropriate childcare to support parents into employment is a requirement.

Participants felt strongly that ACCOs have a central role in supporting employers to develop their cultural safety capabilities and deliver appropriate on the job supports.

#### ***Key Insight 6***

#### **Ensuring and positively obligating cultural safety in the workplace should be a critical feature of the ISEP**

Building cultural safety in the workplace is critical to successful outcomes of the new ISEP. This includes positive obligations on employers to make workplaces culturally safe, a view that was strongly expressed by industry leaders. Stakeholders agreed that ACCOs and Indigenous communities can play a key role in this and that employers require support, training, accreditation, and positive obligations to develop such measures within local Indigenous community contexts.

**E. Are there specific cohorts (inc. cohorts not currently jobseekers e.g. entry level workers looking for promotions; school leavers considering work/study) you see needing greater assistance than others in your region?**

Discussions identified a set of specific cohorts that could be targeted by ISEP.

Participants discussed a key set of common cohorts requiring greater assistance. The main cohorts were:

- Youth,
- Early school leavers,
- People with disability,
- Mothers and teenage parents,
- mature age workers,
- Post release prisoners / criminal record holders, and
- Long-term unemployed.

Beyond these was a diverse range of cohorts nominated by participants across regions, speaking to the complexity of barriers Indigenous communities face. The following table provides an overview of the specific cohorts identified attributed to region during consultations (noting these were limited by the stakeholders present and the direction of discussions). NIAA notes further discussions with key stakeholders in each region may further refine cohorts for ISEP funding.

**Table 4: Cohorts discussed by NIAA region and location**

NIAA Region	Location	Specific cohorts
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Nhulunbuy	Youth
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Nhulunbuy	People with a disability
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Nhulunbuy	Early school leavers
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Nhulunbuy	Mothers
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Nhulunbuy	Entrepreneurs
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Nhulunbuy	Mature age workers

NIAA Region	Location	Specific cohorts
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Groote Eylandt	Youth
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Groote Eylandt	Women
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Groote Eylandt	Women experiencing domestic and family violence
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Groote Eylandt	Mature-aged workers
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Maningrida	Youth
Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Maningrida	Early school leavers
Top End and Tiwi Islands	Darwin	Youth
Top End and Tiwi Islands	Darwin	Early school leavers
Top End and Tiwi Islands	Darwin	Long-term unemployed
Top End and Tiwi Islands	Darwin	Rural and remote job seekers
Top End and Tiwi Islands	Darwin	People without a fixed home
Central Australia	Alice Springs	Youth
Central Australia	Tennant Creek	Teenage parents

NIAA Region	Location	Specific cohorts
Central Australia	Tennant Creek	Long-term unemployed
Central Australia	Tennant Creek	Mature-aged workers
Greater Western Australia	Perth	Youth
Greater Western Australia	Perth	Early school leavers
Greater Western Australia	Perth	Mature-aged
Greater Western Australia	Perth	People with a disability
Greater Western Australia	Pilbara	Youth
Greater Western Australia	Pilbara	Early school leavers
Greater Western Australia	Pilbara	Long-term unemployed
Greater Western Australia	Pilbara	Post release prisoners / criminal record holders
Greater Western Australia	Goldfields	Youth
Greater Western Australia	Goldfields	Early school leavers
Greater Western Australia	Goldfields	Long-term unemployed

NIAA Region	Location	Specific cohorts
Greater Western Australia	Goldfields	Unregistered job seekers (not registered for Centrelink or other government supports)
Greater Western Australia	Midwest	Youth
Greater Western Australia	Midwest	Unregistered job seekers (not registered for Centrelink or other government supports)
Greater Western Australia	Southwest/Great Southern WA	Youth
Greater Western Australia	Southwest/Great Southern WA	Post release prisoners / criminal records
Greater Western Australia	Greater WA	Youth aged 15-24
Kimberley Region	Derby	Youth
Kimberley Region	Derby	Long-term unemployed

NIAA Region	Location	Specific cohorts
Kimberley Region	Derby	Post release prisoners / criminal record holders
Kimberley Region	Broome	Youth
Kimberley Region	Kununurra	Youth
Kimberley Region	Kununurra	Long-term unemployed
Kimberley Region	Kununurra	Women
South Queensland Region	Brisbane	Youth
South Queensland Region	Brisbane	Rural and remote job seekers
South Queensland Region	Toowoomba	25 to 44 age group.
South Queensland Region	Rockhampton	Youth
South Queensland Region	Rockhampton	Early school leavers
South Queensland Region	Rockhampton	Mature-aged workers
South Queensland Region	Rockhampton	People with a disability
South Queensland Region	Rockhampton	Long-term unemployed

NIAA Region	Location	Specific cohorts
South Queensland Region	Rockhampton	Post release prisoners / criminal record holders
South Queensland Region	Woorabinda	Youth
South Queensland Region	Woorabinda	Early school leavers
South Queensland Region	Woorabinda	Mothers
North Queensland	Cairns	Youth
North Queensland	Cairns	Young Mothers
North Queensland	Cairns	Early school leavers
North Queensland	Cairns	People without a fixed home
North Queensland	Cairns	People with a disability
North Queensland	Mt Isa	Youth
North Queensland	Mt Isa	Early school leavers
North Queensland	Mt Isa	Young women
North Queensland	Mt Isa	Young parents

NIAA Region	Location	Specific cohorts
North Queensland	Mt Isa	Older job seekers wanting to change career
North Queensland	Mackay	Youth
North Queensland	Mackay	Early school leavers
North Queensland	Townsville	Youth
North Queensland	Townsville	25 to 44 age group
North Queensland	Townsville	School leavers
North Queensland	Townsville	Post release prisoners / criminal record holders
North Queensland	Townsville	Parents returning to work
Eastern New South Wales	Sydney	School leavers
Eastern New South Wales	Sydney	People with a disability
Eastern New South Wales	Sydney	Post release prisoners / criminal record holders
Eastern New South Wales	NSW South Coast	Youth

NIAA Region	Location	Specific cohorts
Eastern New South Wales	NSW South Coast	Early school leavers
Eastern New South Wales	NSW North Coast	Mature-aged workers
Eastern New South Wales	NSW North Coast	Youth
Eastern New South Wales	NSW North Coast	Young parents
Eastern New South Wales	Empowered Communities	Not identified
Western New South Wales	Wagga Wagga	Mature-aged workers
Victoria-Tasmania	Victoria	Mature-aged workers
Victoria-Tasmania	Victoria	People with a disability
Victoria-Tasmania	Victoria	Youth
Victoria-Tasmania	Bendigo	Youth
Victoria-Tasmania	Hobart	Youth
South Australia	Adelaide	Youth
South Australia	Adelaide	Early school leavers
South Australia	Adelaide	Women
South Australia	Port Augusta	Youth

The ISEP design should be responsive to the inability of a 'one size fits all' approach to address characteristics specific to remote and very remote communities

Participants from or familiar with remote and very remote communities were unanimous in their view that a 'one size fits all' approach does not consider characteristics specific to remote communities.

Some issues raised specific to remote and very remote communities included:

- Career pathways and the need to resolve the structural challenges in remote communities where a genuine local economy may not exist and therefore jobs and the ability to have a career are not currently options.
- Availability of local / regional jobs is an important issue for many remote communities as the results are either high levels of local unemployment or an inability for people to remain on Country and be employed. FIFO and DIDO workforces keep Indigenous communities locked out of local employment.
- The sheer remoteness of some regions and the distance between communities such as those in the Pilbara and the Kimberley in Western Australia makes transport a major, and often insurmountable barrier.
- Some areas do not have a local high school and early school leavers are more common.
- The absence of appropriate training options in remote areas impedes Indigenous employment. Importantly, this was an issue raised in regional areas as well.

#### ***Key Insight 7***

#### **The ISEP should recognise that structural challenges exist in remote communities that impede the growth of local jobs markets**

Some remote communities may lack a genuine local economy. A responsive, flexibly designed ISEP that allows for local solutions could address these structural challenges in innovative ways that are community led and supported by industry and government.

## Discussion Question Two: Opportunities in this region

With respect to opportunities in this region, participants answered the following questions:

- A. What are the key opportunities in your region?
- B. What are the training or employment aspirations of local Indigenous jobseekers or local communities?

### A. What are the key opportunities in your region?

Regional / sectoral opportunities

A range of sectoral opportunities relevant to regional location was provided by participants.

The NDIS was nominated in many regions as an opportunity for Indigenous Australians to be trained to provide culturally appropriate support services back into their communities, as there is a lack of Indigenous support workers in the NDIS. Targeted training to support entry into the digital economy was seen by some participants as an opportunity to both create local jobs markets and protect local economies from COVID-19.

The following table provides the sectoral opportunities nominated by each region during the consultations (noting opportunities listed may be applicable to other regions not listed).

**Table 5: Sector Opportunities by Location**

Sector	Location
<b>Construction including civic infrastructure projects</b>	Brisbane, Toowoomba, Victoria, Rockhampton, Perth, Darwin, Midwest, Greater Western, Bendigo, Nhulunbuy, Southwest and Great Southern WA, Adelaide, Cairns, NSW South Coast, Sydney, Mt Isa, Townsville, Mackay, NSW North Coast, Wagga Wagga
<b>Tourism, Ecotourism, Educational Tourism</b>	Alice Springs, Brisbane, Toowoomba, Victoria, Darwin, Midwest, Nhulunbuy, Groote Eylandt, Derby, Cairns, NSW South Coast, Mt Isa, Townsville, Mackay, NSW North Coast
<b>Health and Allied Health</b>	Sydney, Alice Springs, Darwin, Groote Eylandt, Maningrida, Rockhampton, Mt Isa,, Townsville, Cairns, Mackay, Adelaide, Port Augusta, Hobart, Bendigo, Derby, Greater WA, Kununurra, Pilbara
<b>Aged Care and NDIS</b>	NSW North Coast, NSW South Coast, Darwin, Brisbane, Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Mt Isa, Townsville, Mackay, Derby, Kununurra, Perth, Tennant Creek
<b>Social Assistance services</b>	Sydney, Darwin, Groote Eylandt, Rockhampton, Townsville, Mackay, Port Augusta, Hobart, Greater WA, Kununurra, Perth, Pilbara
<b>Working on Country / Cultural Industries /Ranger program /National Parks and conservation</b>	Midwest, Kununurra, Nhulunbuy, Groote Eylandt, Cairns, NSW South Coast, Sydney, Mt Isa, Mackay, NSW North Coast, Wagga Wagga
<b>STEM</b>	Brisbane, Adelaide, NSW South Coast, Mt Isa, National
<b>Education and Training</b>	Tennant Creek, Victoria, Derby, Adelaide
<b>Renewable energy</b>	Tennant Creek, Victoria, Nhulunbuy, Derby, Adelaide, Mt Isa, Townsville
<b>Public Administration</b>	Goldfields, Darwin, Perth, Port Augusta, Cairns

Sector	Location
<b>Agriculture</b>	Toowoomba, Darwin, Midwest, Bendigo, Southwest and Great Southern WA, Kununurra, Adelaide, NSW South Coast, Mt Isa, Townsville, Woorabinda, NSW North Coast
<b>Hospitality</b>	Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Perth, Darwin, Pilbara, Midwest, Greater Western, Bendigo, Adelaide, NSW South Coast, Mt Isa, NSW North Coast
<b>Retail/supermarkets and customer service</b>	Victoria, Pilbara, Adelaide, Townsville
<b>Defence</b>	Rockhampton, Derby, Adelaide, Cairns, NSW South Coast, Townsville, Mackay
<b>Mining/resource sector</b>	Rockhampton, Perth, Pilbara, Goldfields, Derby, Mt Isa, Townsville, Woorabinda
<b>Local government</b>	Goldfields, Darwin, Perth, Port Augusta, Cairns
<b>Professional, Scientific, and Technical services</b>	Adelaide, Sydney, Darwin, Perth, NSW South Coast, NSW North Coast, Hobart
<b>Agriculture Forestry and Fishing</b>	Toowoomba, Darwin, Midwest, Bendigo, Southwest- and- Great Southern-WA, Kununurra, Adelaide, NSW South-Coast, Mt Isa, Townsville, Woorabinda, NSW North- Coast
<b>Juvenile Justice / Corrections</b>	Wagga Wagga

Building the Indigenous business and entrepreneurial sector is a key priority to provide opportunities for Indigenous economies and expand the Indigenous employer base.

A key theme across the roundtables was the need for supports within the ISEP to build the Indigenous business sector. Tourism and Indigenous cultural industry were commonly raised. Many Indigenous Australians do not have the support or existing knowledge to establish a business or access grant opportunities. Participants were very enthusiastic about courses that build skills in areas such as administration and other areas relating to business management, business development and social enterprises.

Participants offered a range of opportunities to support the development of the Indigenous business sector including:

- Business hubs
- Business literacy courses
- Investment in indigenous business, and
- Working with communities to identify business opportunities.

The fundamental objectives of the ISEP should be systems reform, a strengths-based approach to Indigenous capacity, improving education and training opportunities, providing opportunities to industry to strengthen capacity and leveraging government policy opportunities

Participants reported the need for wide-ranging systems reform in the ISEP design, much of which requires a significant shift to place ACCOs and community-led collaboration, co-design and implementation of Indigenous employment services at the centre of the program.

Many participants noted the lack of integration between Federal agencies and other jurisdictions and the resulting funding siloing as both a key impediment and an opportunity for reform of the Indigenous employment system so it is firmly based in increased collaboration. The National

Empowered Communities group believes there is scope to use existing systems, entities and structures to create more integrated and better-organised opportunities.

A common theme across participants was the need for a shift in funding approaches to provide realistic timeframes. This is based in the belief that short-term contracts are seen as contributing to system instability and current funding timeframes do not support successful Indigenous employment outcomes. Participants from some areas (namely Toowoomba, Nhulunbuy, Adelaide, and Hobart) cited the removal of funding from regional areas.

Also common across participants was the view that there is a strong need for coordinated approaches and clear communication channels between government and Indigenous communities to strengthen community decision-making. The role of ACCOs was cited here as fundamental.

Industry and other participants were supportive of developing priorities, desired outcomes and the actions required to recruit, retain and develop a larger Indigenous workforce presence. However, they nominated requiring assistance to engage directly with the Indigenous community to co-design pathways and traineeships to meet the needs and aspirations of Indigenous students and jobseekers.

#### Culturally safe workplaces

The need to improve employer capacity to provide culturally safe workplaces is essential to increasing both Indigenous employment and retention. The majority of participants nominated the need for industry and employer interventions backed by ACCO-led supports and delivery.

Industry and other stakeholders raised the lack of employer supports to build culturally safe workplaces as a fundamental gap in the current system.

#### Government procurement policies

The Federal Government Indigenous Procurement Policy was recognised by many participants as a key driver of Indigenous participation in the economy, however some participants hoped to see greater use of government tenders and their governance mechanisms. To further stimulate opportunities, participants identified increased employment targets and increasing the total number of domestic contracts for goods and services issued by government agencies.

Some participants felt that Indigenous procurement policies are ineffective in supporting small to medium Indigenous businesses, smaller Indigenous-led organisations and ACCO bids for high value tenders, and that the right ecosystem needs to be created to ensure these groups are able to compete for tender against larger mainstream operations.

#### A strengths-based approach to Indigenous knowledge and skills involves the reframing of deficit discourse

Reframing of deficit discourse must centre on Indigenous natural capital to focus on potential opportunities stemming from a body of Indigenous capability, knowledge, experience and wisdom and recognising cultural knowledge and experience as a skill set, especially for remote communities. Indigenous knowledge and existing skills need to be taken into consideration during recruitment. An example provided by some participants was the cultural knowledge and caring skills many Indigenous Australians can use as a strength to enter sectors such as aged care, allied health, community services and NDIS service provision.

For many Indigenous communities, the long-term effects of unemployment and intergenerational unemployment has lessened the awareness of existing capabilities and the benefits of employment. There is opportunity to promote the benefits of stable employment. As well as including reference to financial security and improving livelihood, participants want to see the contribution to self, family and community highlighted as reasons to obtain and maintain work.

Participants saw long-term mentoring programs that are culturally appropriate, informed and Indigenous led as a fundamental requirement to support the Indigenous jobseeker employment journey from job attainment to retention and career advancement.

The ISEP planning for education and training opportunities must incorporate industry training partnerships, increased resourcing to skill / upskill Indigenous Australians and a broader range of education pursuits and pathways that incorporate local needs

Many participants see the new ISEP as an opportunity to develop training industry partnerships to assist in building appropriate training linked to available job opportunities and the creation of an employment pipeline at the regional level addressing the needs of both industry and Indigenous jobseekers. There is also a long-term community benefit in matching skills development with local / regional job opportunities as this allows Indigenous Australians to stay in community while being engaged in employment.

Some participants noted the example of insufficient local contractors or trained tradespeople in some remote regions resulting in reliance on FIFO / DIDO workers, including for maintenance needs in communities. Industry partnerships can assist in reducing this reliance by providing skilled community members.

Many participants saw a need to increase resourcing in the regions generally for training and upskilling current employees. Specific requirements nominated included more trainers and training supports. Regions ranging from remote to regional and urban all saw opportunity in purpose-built training facilities. Some participants from urban and regional areas called for an increase in more apprenticeships, trainees, cadetships and school-based apprenticeships to support Indigenous entry to employment.

Disengagement of youth is considered a serious problem in urban, regional and remote regions. One opportunity to address this raised by some participants, in particular in remote Northern Territory communities where local creative and traditional practices are strong is the inclusion of more creative pursuits being taught in schools to re-engage young people and the creation of pathways to creative industries.

#### ***Key Insight 8***

**The ISEP should prioritise strategic coordination and collaboration at the regional level that supports ACCOs as partners and collaborators coupled with higher levels of employer accountability**

A regional strategic approach is called for in the new ISEP that encourages collaboration across ACCOs and Indigenous communities, government, and industry to build regional solutions and programs to achieve successful outcomes.

### **B. What are the training or employment aspirations of local Indigenous jobseekers or local communities?**

The ISEP design should be flexible, place-based, community-led and client-focused to address the training and employment aspirations of local Indigenous jobseekers and their communities

While many participants felt they could not comment appropriately on this question in the absence of Indigenous jobseekers in the consultation process, they held clear views about the approaches required to facilitate the incorporation of jobseeker and community aspirations into the ISEP.

These included the following suggestions for training:

- Locally available, culturally appropriate training, strategically matched to regional job opportunities.

- Client-centered, holistic, local supports that move away from a national, 'one size fits all' approach.
- Culturally appropriate, local mentoring models expanded beyond pre-employment to post-employment which include a focus on retention beyond the current standard of 26 weeks and on career development.
- Linking career and educational pathways by identifying and tapping into entry level positions for secondary students that can lead to further opportunities.
- Recognition that the norm for many Indigenous jobseekers, particularly young people, is intergenerational unemployment and they require intensive, appropriate supports to be job ready.
- Supporting jobseekers to be job ready through paid training programs to equip jobseekers with basic credentials to enter employment positions, and then continue with on-the-job training.
- Recognition of prior learning and micro-skilling of Indigenous Australians who have held roles for a long time but do not have formal qualifications. Micro-credentialing was also highlighted as a way to get people into jobs before continuing to train them.

Participants also provided the following suggestions for responding to employment aspirations:

- Taking a local focus that is strategically matched to regional jobs availability and skills/training.
- Regional economic strategic approaches designed by community, industry and government to ensure pipeline creation, best use of government procurement policies, accountability, targets and outcomes.
- The ability to live and work on Country through the development of Indigenous tourism, expanded land care (Indigenous Rangers) programs, the NDIS, aged care, traditional knowledge and creative industries.
- Ensuring cultural safety by creating culturally safe employers and workplaces.
- Implementing cultural governance frameworks to activate and support industry practice that is embedded in the lived cultures and experiences of Indigenous Australians, families and communities.
- Shaping young leaders into future leaders through investment in the younger generation to enable personal development and facilitate progression into senior-level roles.
- Expansion of programs such as the NSW Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant (EDAEG) which subsidises the salary, development and support costs of Indigenous employees in public service agencies and local government authorities. A similar funding model could be created for ACCOs.
- Better aligning local and regional opportunities with the aspirations of Indigenous jobseekers.

#### ***Key Insight 4***

##### **The ISEP should be flexible, place-based, community-led and client-focused**

The ISEP should be flexible, support local approaches, and avoid 'one size fits all' funding arrangements. Within the context of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, participants emphasised the importance of NIAA undertaking collaboration on community-led and -designed solutions to achieve outcomes for Indigenous jobseekers appropriate to specific cultural and regional contexts.

## Discussion Question Three: Future Options

With respect to future options, participants were asked to consider what future success might look like and to generate a range of ideas to help achieve this future state.

The examples and responses provided by participants were able to be categorised across four pillars:

- Social: the changes required to address social barriers for Indigenous Australians in the ISEP design in order to deliver the future state.
- Structural: the structural changes required in the ISEP design in order to deliver the future state.
- Strategic: the strategic approaches required to be incorporated into the ISEP design to deliver the future state.
- Non-homogenous: the approaches required in the ISEP to respond to the needs of specific communities that do not relate to all regions or locations.

### *Key Insight 9*

**The ISEP could address the future for Indigenous employment through a lens of social, structural and strategic approaches to deliver outcomes as well as ensuring flexibility in program design to respond to non-homogenous requirements at the local and regional levels**

The ISEP should allow for the ability for address social, structural and strategic issues and opportunities in a flexible way to allow for place-based responses that can adapt to the specific requirements for a particular community or region.

The ISEP should incorporate program approaches that address social barriers to Indigenous employment by doing things placing Indigenous communities at the centre of the design and delivery

The overwhelming common themes of the social barriers to Indigenous employment focus on participants wanting a program that enable them to work towards a more equitable start for Indigenous Australians seeking employment.

Program approaches appropriate to Indigenous audiences will be and delivered through holistic, culturally appropriate, community-led approaches that are embedded in program frameworks. There will be a focus on adequately resourced wrap-around employment services that address the needs of Indigenous jobseekers. There will be recognition that current learning models are not delivering the required outcomes and an Indigenous-led model should be developed and implemented.

Many participants raised 'doing things the Indigenous way' as a basis for improved cultural immersion programs, making sure businesses taking on Indigenous Australians understand Indigenous culture. Time and resources should be provided to support employers and non-Indigenous employees to increase understanding and awareness of Indigenous practices, innovation, and knowledge systems.

Strengths-based approaches to Indigenous jobseekers will be incorporated and Indigenous jobseekers will approach job searching from an empowered starting point that matches individual skills and strengths to jobs and values Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing that will be embedded into service delivery and the workplace. Aspirations are identified and realistically explored so that appropriate pathways can be determined. As with the rest of the Australian community, Indigenous jobseekers want to engage in the types of employment they enjoy.

Again, longer term, culturally appropriate mentoring programs were highlighted as key to the future state. Participants saw mentoring programs as culturally equipped to support the Indigenous jobseeker employment journey through attainment, retention and career progression.

Participants continued to focus on Indigenous youth and envisaged a future state where they will be encouraged to follow a variety of training pathways and aspire to be professionals as well as work in lower skilled roles. In the future state Indigenous Australians will be employed in all roles and at all levels, within organisations.

There is a need at the community level for skilled community members who can deliver services allowing for mob to work with mob on Country.

Currently, in many Indigenous communities there is a need for increased Indigenous service delivery. Participants nominated creating more roles where Indigenous Australians can work with their community across areas of need, for example in NDIS, aged care or childcare provision or infrastructure maintenance. In the future state the professional expertise of the individual is used to increase community outcomes and provide in-situ mentoring opportunities.

More discretionary power is required in the hiring process to address the needs of Indigenous jobseekers with criminal records

A common barrier raised by participants was the barrier a criminal record creates for Indigenous jobseekers. A solution to this is for Government to review and revise measures which deter employers and service providers from offering work to jobseekers with criminal records.

To deliver the future state the ISEP must address structural issues that impede Indigenous employment outcomes and deliver increased community decision making, increased obligations and accountabilities and culturally safe workplaces

A focus on supporting ACCOs to provide an expanded role in employment services design and delivery is a fundamental component of delivering community decision making as part of the ISEP. This includes:

- Supporting ACCOs to be the key organisations supporting Indigenous job seekers.
- Local capacity is strong and connected
- Early investment and capacity building of ACCOs and Indigenous-led operations to increase competitiveness.

Many participants seek a co-designed ISEP that incorporates strategic coordination and includes obligations and accountabilities built into service provider contracts.

It is clear from participant feedback that a shift from a 'one size fits all' approach to a place-based, Indigenous-led, person-centred model is required. Participants want to see individualised responses tailored to jobseeker and community needs and circumstances. At a general level this includes the following:

- There is a strong desire for early, intensive pre-employment interventions to identify individual jobseeker needs.
- Most regions look to a sustainable and supported transition from school to work that take a long-sighted view on creating planning and pathways for individual students. This includes support networks and training for early school leavers to avoid falling through system gaps.
- Work experience for Indigenous students including expanded work experience options to give young people an idea of their options. Use of work experience programs where Indigenous youth can work with Indigenous role models and school-based traineeships that lead to employment in local businesses / industry.
- Longer term funding and contracts to ensure sustainable employment for Indigenous jobseekers. Long-term investment decreases the uncertainty associated with short-term contracts and casual positions.

- An easy to navigate employment supports system, and easy access to available services information and system for jobseekers, employers and ACCOs alike including mentoring guides and information packages developed by the Indigenous community. The information will be accurate, up to date and relevant to specific geographic locations.
- Wider access to information and opportunities will include more expos, open days and careers days that showcase Indigenous Australians talking about employment realities and opportunities.
- There will be a simpler system and less regulation and red tape around funding opportunities to allow for easier up take and utilisation.

The future state cannot be delivered without culturally safe workplaces including employers having a positive obligation to be 'job ready' for Indigenous employees

Some participants suggested the need for Indigenous community-led development of culturally safe frameworks to assist employers taking on Indigenous jobseekers. Non-Indigenous employers will be appropriately supported to recruit and retain Indigenous staff. There will be a focus on building the capacity of employers to appropriately support Indigenous employees within their business.

There is a focus on Indigenous jobseekers to be 'job ready'. There should be a focus on employer obligations to be ready to employ Indigenous jobseekers and create culturally safe workplaces.

#### **Key Insight 6**

##### **Ensuring and positively obligating cultural safety in the workplace should be a critical feature of the ISEP**

Building cultural safety in the workplace is critical to successful outcomes of the new ISEP. This includes positive obligations on employers to make workplaces culturally safe, a view that was strongly expressed by industry leaders. Stakeholders agreed that ACCOs and Indigenous communities must play a key role in this and that employers require support, training, accreditation, and positive obligations to develop such measures within local Indigenous community contexts.

A strong strategic approach must be central to the ISEP to deliver collaborative, coordinated responses to local and regional needs for Indigenous communities, industry and government.

Participants felt strongly about the need for increased strategic coordination involving community, industry and government. The nominated future state outcomes requiring a strategic approach were as follows:

- Developing a strong 'cultural economy' based on protected Indigenous cultural and traditional intellectual property.
- Regional economic development strategies developed collaboratively by community, government and industry at the regional level.
- Indigenous networks connecting Indigenous employees as well as Indigenous organisations to facilitate employment opportunities.
- Young Indigenous Australians are actively included in informal or formal networks.
- Collaboration between government, community and industry ensures employment pipelines are created and supported.
- Unlike other policy areas, there is no Indigenous employment peak body at the national or state / territory levels. Supporting the creation of such a peak body will strongly support ISEP structural and systems approaches.

- Better use made of government procurement policies to drive Indigenous employment targets.
- There was very strong support for the development of the Indigenous tourism and business sector more generally.
- Small to medium business enterprises support people working on Country, provide flexibility that caters to family and cultural obligations and creates a pipeline for Indigenous employment.
- Partnerships between ACCOs and bodies with economic development expertise drive economic development, including utilisation of land currently owned by Indigenous bodies.
- In the future state, there are stronger regulatory mechanisms and accountability to ensure employer obligations and Indigenous employment and retention targets are met.

There are non-homogenous issues relating to particular communities, often remote and very remote communities, that require inclusion in the ISEP design

Some participants from specific areas, commonly remote and very remote areas but not exclusively so, provided a series of program responses to create a future state that is responsive to their needs. These included:

- A 'one-stop shop' approach for remote and very remote areas to allow for easy access to, and simplified processes for, government programs and supports.
- Local learning centres in remote and very remote areas that are client- centred and holistic focussing on improving literacy and numeracy, personal development and initiatives enabling young school leavers with ongoing supports.
- Local employment opportunities available through local jobs and local training matched to industry needs to create a skilled Indigenous workforce to shift from the FIFO/DIDO model in remote and very remote areas.
- Creating Working on Country economies through the creation of roles in areas of community need that support Indigenous Australians living and working on Country.
- Indigenous Australians delivering NDIS, aged care, community services, childcare, allied health services in community.
- A strong 'cultural economy' based on Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous cultural and intellectual property will be protected.
- The National Empowered Communities group nominated a role for an international trade delegation of Indigenous participants or businesses to advance Indigenous Australians' economic interests in global markets.
- In the desired future state there will be innovative models that operate as social enterprises.
- Addressing the existing lack of access to capital for Indigenous businesses through strategic solutions to linking with investors, venture capitalists or other sources willing to fund Indigenous business. Financial institutions engage in joint funding models which allow for riskier investment.
- Coordination between native title groups: as South Australia has a significant area of determined native title lands, there are various registered, prescribed bodies-corporate which manage land on behalf of the native title holders. Due to the large number of these groups, confusion has arisen around opportunities stemming from native title in the region. A coordinated approach will support decreasing confusion and allow for economic planning.

***Key Insight 7***

**The ISEP should recognise that structural challenges exist in remote communities that impede the growth of local jobs markets**

Some remote communities may lack a genuine local economy. A responsive, flexibly designed ISEP that allows for local solutions could address these structural challenges in innovative ways that are community led and supported by industry and government.

## Written Submissions: Detailed Findings

A full list of all public responses to the ISEP Discussion Paper is provided at Appendix C, below. Several respondents also assessed the NIAA Discussion Paper as lacking sufficient detail about the ISEP which made it a challenge to provide specific policy recommendations.<sup>11,12</sup>

### Discussion Question 1:

In the first Discussion Question, NIAA asked prospective respondents:

How should the Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (ISEP) work alongside the new employment services model and the new remote engagement program to build work-ready skills and connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to rewarding, sustainable jobs?

- a. NIAA is interested in stakeholders' views on whether Indigenous-specific employment investment should target specific cohorts, transition points, regions, industries, barriers, etc.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Key Insight 10**

#### **The ISEP design and implementation should include Indigenous Australians and communities as co-designers and partners in specific local contexts**

For the ISEP to achieve success, Indigenous Australians and organisations should be in deep collaboration with government and decision-makers at the local level. Increased funding for ongoing service provision that recognises local and cultural contexts regarding employment, training and relationships between industry and government was considered vital by stakeholders.

Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs), Traditional Owners and Native Title Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs), and Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) should perform vital role as central partners with NIAA

In reply to all Discussion Questions asked by NIAA, most written respondents highlighted the need for the ISEP to position Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs), Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations (ACCHOs), Traditional Owners, Native Title Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs) and the Indigenous Sector to be central co-designers and partners in policy development, establishment, and evaluation processes.<sup>14,15,16,17,18,19</sup> Respondents stated that ACCOs – and Indigenous-owned and -controlled employment services specifically – have the capacity to provide place-based and culturally-specific training, education, and employment strategies within their communities. Respondents argued that ACCOs receiving funding through the ISEP require further flexible long-term funding (minimum 5-10 years) to ensure their

<sup>11</sup> Submission 4: East Kimberley Job Pathways, p. 4

<sup>12</sup> Submission 48: Aboriginal Executive Council

<sup>13</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), *Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (ISEP): Discussion Paper*, NIAA, 2021, Australian Government, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Submission 40: National Native Title Council

<sup>15</sup> Submission 23: Real Futures

<sup>16</sup> Submission 49: Charles Darwin University

<sup>17</sup> Submission 32

<sup>18</sup> Submission 57: NSW Aboriginal Land Council

<sup>19</sup> Submission 61: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

sustainability to do so. The ISEP was described as a key way to achieve such an outcome.<sup>20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27</sup>

A key priority for the ISEP in this context was for community-led identification of employment opportunities and decision making that would result in collaboration and co-design for the future regarding Indigenous-specific employment programs.<sup>28,29,30,31,32,33</sup>

Several written responses detailed how doing so would make the ISEP consistent with the policy context of the following:

- *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (the National Agreement) and its four Priority Reforms: formal partnerships and shared decision making, to build the community-controlled sector, transform government organisations, and to share access to data and information at a regional level<sup>34,35,36,37</sup>
- the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) (Articles 5, 21, 23, & 32), the latter of which outlines the existing rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to facilitate Indigenous economic development, priorities, and strategies on Indigenous terms.<sup>38,39,40</sup>

Therefore, community support for the ISEP and its initiatives, as several respondents argued throughout their replies to these Discussion Questions, will result from co-design and collaboration with ACCOs, Traditional Owners, PBCs, LALCs, and non-Indigenous service providers within this policy context.<sup>41,42,43,44</sup>

The value and potential of Indigenous employees to employers should be front and centre in the ISEP

Several respondents propose that NIAA could also encourage and incentivise non-Indigenous employers – from small to large businesses – to recognise the value and potential of employing

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<sup>20</sup> Submission 18: Macquarie University

<sup>21</sup> Submission 48: Aboriginal Executive Council

<sup>22</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

<sup>23</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

<sup>24</sup> Submission 42: First Nations Media Australia

<sup>25</sup> Submission 3: The Australia Institute

<sup>26</sup> Submission 58: Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

<sup>27</sup> Submission 57: NSW Aboriginal Land Council

<sup>28</sup> Submission 27: My Pathway

<sup>29</sup> Submission 40: National Native Title Council

<sup>30</sup> Submission 48: Aboriginal Executive Council

<sup>31</sup> Submission 54: Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Empowered Communities

<sup>32</sup> Submission 49: Charles Darwin University

<sup>33</sup> Submission 62: Tranby National Indigenous Adult Education and Training

<sup>34</sup> Submission 48: Aboriginal Executive Council

<sup>35</sup> Submission 61: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

<sup>36</sup> Submission 58: Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

<sup>37</sup> Submission 60

<sup>38</sup> Submission 40: National Native Title Council

<sup>39</sup> Submission 3: The Australia Institute

<sup>40</sup> Submission 58: Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

<sup>41</sup> Submission 33: Minerals Council of Australia

<sup>42</sup> Submission 26: Advance Personnel Management

<sup>43</sup> Submission 34: Kimberley Group Training

<sup>44</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

Indigenous Australians and supporting Indigenous-specific employment programs through a strength-based approach.<sup>45,46,47,48,49</sup>

This included providing further funding for long-term training, support, and strategies for ACCOs and employers to increase their rates of employing Indigenous jobseekers, as well as requiring employers to invest in their Indigenous employees when accessing ISEP funding.<sup>50,51,52,53,54</sup>

Respondents also recommended Indigenous-specific employment programs beyond the 26-week milestone for both prospective employees and for capacity building of local ACCOs to provide such services and to extend wraparound service support beyond the first 12 months of an apprenticeship or job placement.<sup>55,56</sup>

Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs), and their Indigenous employment targets and emphasis on installation of cultural safety protocols in an organisation, could also be emphasised by NIAA in the selection of ISEP funding recipients to further increase Indigenous participation in employment opportunities through subsequent workforce planning.<sup>57</sup>

Another way to incentivise non-Indigenous employers to undertake successful employment of Indigenous Australians, one respondent argued, would be to ensure the ISEP has “targeted and streamlined process[es] where successful practices of actual employers in the direct recruitment, support, mentoring and development of Aboriginal workers, are rewarded through the amount of subsidies provided, in line with the exact amount of hours worked.”<sup>58</sup>

Amplifying local job opportunities, creating clear training pathways, and working with communities, employers, and local council in identifying “real work” within growing industries in area

Many respondents recommend that future Indigenous-specific employment initiatives need to be developed, tailored, and evaluated within their specific local contexts – including existing infrastructure, social barriers to employment, geographical impacts, and workforce skills – and for the strengthening of relationships between industry, ACCOs, government and Indigenous employees, trainees, and jobseekers in differing regions.<sup>59,60,61,62,63,64,65,66</sup> The creation of formal collaboration and referral measures for non-Indigenous service providers would be key to ensuring ISEP funding would be utilised for said collaboration and outcomes for Indigenous jobseekers.<sup>67</sup> Making connections with major industries and employers in local areas will also be key to

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<sup>45</sup> Submission 24: North Coast Aboriginal Development Alliance

<sup>46</sup> Submission 4: East Kimberley Job Pathways

<sup>47</sup> Submission 22: National Rugby League

<sup>48</sup> Submission 33: Minerals Council of Australia

<sup>49</sup> Submission 50: Reconciliation Australia

<sup>50</sup> Submission 12: Kajarinya Training Organisation

<sup>51</sup> Submission 48: First Nations Media Australia

<sup>52</sup> Submission 8: Fifteen (15) Times Better

<sup>53</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

<sup>54</sup> Submission 21: Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre

<sup>55</sup> Submission 27: My Pathway

<sup>56</sup> Submission 29: National Apprentice Employment Network

<sup>57</sup> Submission 50: Reconciliation Australia

<sup>58</sup> Submission 36: East Arnhem Regional Council, p. 2

<sup>59</sup> Submission 29: National Apprentice Employment Network

<sup>60</sup> Submission 38: Kapani

<sup>61</sup> Submission 15: Indigenous Land & Sea Corporation

<sup>62</sup> Submission 49: Charles Darwin University

<sup>63</sup> Submission 22: National Rugby League

<sup>64</sup> Submission 32

<sup>65</sup> Submission 4: East Kimberley Job Pathways

<sup>66</sup> Submission 8: Fifteen (15) Times Better

<sup>67</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

highlighting local workforce needs and linking these with Indigenous workforce participation outcomes.<sup>68,69,70</sup>

Co-designed training programs that aim to strengthen the transition periods between school, university, and subsequent career development and progression – particularly for young cohorts – were also viewed by many respondents as a core strategy NIAA should seek to adopt and promote through the ISEP.<sup>71,72,73,74,75,76,77,78</sup>

Respondents articulated that the creation of a training package that facilitated clear transitions between each stage of career development within the context of local Indigenous communities' needs and aspirations – including pre-employment, numeracy and literacy, bilingual translation, digital literacy, enterprise development, and ongoing post-employment programs – along with a regularly updated list of the availability employment opportunities in the region, should also be prioritised.<sup>79,80,81,82,83,84,85,86,87,88,89,90</sup>

However, several respondents also highlighted the need to:

- Work with Indigenous Australians as individuals through person-centred approaches.
- Provide individualised work experience, mentoring programs and opportunities for volunteering.
- Provide wraparound support services.
- Offer clear visions of future real employment and career development.<sup>91,92,93,94,95</sup>

Non-Indigenous service providers were also noted as being able to provide support across the employment services sector and could provide additional support through the ISEP but needed to do so in collaboration with ACCOs through partnership, co-design, and co-delivery as the central characteristics of their relationships.<sup>96,97</sup>

Several respondents also recognised that without strong relationships with local Indigenous communities, and an understanding and appreciation of pressures for many Indigenous

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<sup>68</sup> Submission 33: Minerals Council of Australia

<sup>69</sup> Submission 8: Fifteen (15) Times Better

<sup>70</sup> Submission 59: AFL SportsReady

<sup>71</sup> Submission 45: Aurora Education Foundation

<sup>72</sup> Submission 26: Advance Personnel Management

<sup>73</sup> Submission 47: Crown Perth LTD

<sup>74</sup> Submission 20: Jumbunna Institute

<sup>75</sup> Submission 49: Charles Darwin University

<sup>76</sup> Submission 48: First Nations Media Australia

<sup>77</sup> Submission 54: Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Empowered Communities

<sup>78</sup> Submission 22: National Rugby League

<sup>79</sup> Submission 43: The Arnhem Land Aboriginal Progress Corporation

<sup>80</sup> Submission 22: National Rugby League

<sup>81</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

<sup>82</sup> Submission 55: Kimberley Regional Group and Kimberley Zone

<sup>83</sup> Submission 34: Kimberley Group Training

<sup>84</sup> Submission 2: NORTEC

<sup>85</sup> Submission 26: Advance Personnel Management

<sup>86</sup> Submission 23: Real Futures

<sup>87</sup> Submission 56: Reading Writing Hotline

<sup>88</sup> Submission 21: Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre

<sup>89</sup> Submission 58: Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

<sup>90</sup> Submission 61: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

<sup>91</sup> Submission 39: Halls Creek Shire

<sup>92</sup> Submission 41

<sup>93</sup> Submission 22: My Pathway

<sup>94</sup> Submission 5: Volunteering Australia

<sup>95</sup> Submission 39: Halls Shire Creek

<sup>96</sup> Submission 32

<sup>97</sup> Submission 34: Kimberley Group Training

Australians,<sup>98</sup> mainstream delivery of Indigenous-specific employment services would likely continue to underperform in facilitating Indigenous employment.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Submission 54: Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Empowered Communities

<sup>99</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

## Discussion Question 2: How could IAS investment be designed to be more flexible and responsive at the regional level, and better meet the needs of the community for Indigenous job seekers and employers?

In the second Discussion Question, prospective respondents were asked:

How could IAS investment be designed to be more flexible and responsive at the regional level, and better meet the needs of the community for Indigenous job seekers and employers?

- a. NIAA is interested in stakeholders' views on more flexible investment that builds on success factors and leverages partnerships and other investment at the local level, including partnerships and opportunities for co-investment with industry.<sup>100</sup>

### **Key Insights 11 & 12**

#### **The ISEP should embed shared decision making by supporting and funding ACCOs in the delivery of Indigenous-specific employment services**

ACCOs can act as key partners and co-designers of locally and culturally specific employment service provision for current and future Indigenous employees. The primary way of achieving this under the ISEP is a government-funded and supported 'one-stop shop' service in each region that enables collaboration between all major stakeholders.

#### **The ISEP should invest in local ACCOs and Indigenous-specific employment services through flexible and accessible funding arrangements**

Local ACCOs and Indigenous specific employment services should be the key mechanism (or conduit) for the delivery of the ISEP. Further resourcing of ACCOs and local Indigenous employment services would result in strengthening of relationships between Indigenous communities, employers, service providers, and government in locally and culturally specific ways.

Building and supporting Aboriginal community-controlled employment organisations to deliver ISEP for flexible, place-based, community-level driven outcomes

Many respondents called for a major investment of funding by NIAA for local Indigenous-owned and -controlled organisations through the ISEP as co-designers, leaders, and decision makers.<sup>101,102</sup>

Respondents highlighted how Indigenous sector organisations – including ACCOs, ACCHOs, PBCs, and LALCs – delivering Indigenous-specific employment programs and working across a range of industries and sectors, have the capacity to supply long-term training, education, and employment outcomes through their relationships and experience working with local Indigenous communities in culturally appropriate and safe ways. These respondents argued that ACCOs, therefore, should be

<sup>100</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), *Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (ISEP): Discussion Paper*, NIAA, 2021, Australian Government, p. 9.

<sup>101</sup> Submission 35: RAW Group of Companies

<sup>102</sup> Submission 61: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

prioritised – and targeted – in all future IAS investment and the subsequent establishment of the ISEP.<sup>103,104,105,106,107,108,109,110,111,112,113</sup>

Further resourcing, bolstering, and support specifically for the Indigenous community-controlled employment sector, and its value in this context, was seen as key method for ISEP to build on the success of existing Indigenous-led and -owned service provision for Indigenous employees and service participants. Doing so, respondents advised, would:

- Increase the current rates of case management support.
- Assist with targeted cohorts in local contexts.
- Develop job-ready Aboriginal talent pools.
- Create Indigenous-specific workforce specialists.
- Provide ongoing training, qualifications, and support beyond the 26-week milestone.
- Further the development and administration of cultural safety and aptitude mentoring delivery.
- Establish a national Aboriginal employment taskforce and/or Aboriginal employment service peak body.<sup>114,115,116,117,118</sup>

Several respondents also emphasised that ACCOs have the capacity to identify barriers to employment and community expectations for service provision, and could assist in identifying key industries in the region to partner with NIAA and local governments, particularly within the context of partnership and co-design as per the National Agreement.<sup>119,120,121</sup> The strengthening of connections for localised outcomes between ACCOs as conduits between Indigenous and non-Indigenous service providers and industry partners looking for Indigenous employees, was also considered a vital consideration for the eventual ISEP model which could seek to develop local mechanisms to facilitate these relationships.<sup>122,123,124,125,126,127,128</sup>

Potential brokerage and mentorship payments for ACCOs who help establish and maintain these relationships for Indigenous employees was also suggested.<sup>129,130</sup> Such funding could incorporate partnerships with local employment and industries within each region, but also need to ensure their

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<sup>103</sup> Submission 18: Macquarie University

<sup>104</sup> Submission 48: Aboriginal Executive Council

<sup>105</sup> Submission 31: Indigenous Allied Health Australia LTD

<sup>106</sup> Submission 12: Kajarinya Training Organisation

<sup>107</sup> Submission 54: Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Empowered Communities

<sup>108</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

<sup>109</sup> Submission 28: Generation One, Indigenous Employment Partners, and Wirrpanda Foundation

<sup>110</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

<sup>111</sup> Submission 58: Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

<sup>112</sup> Submission 57: NSW Aboriginal Land Council

<sup>113</sup> Submission 61: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

<sup>114</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

<sup>115</sup> Submission 28: Generation One, Indigenous Employment Partners, and Wirrpanda Foundation

<sup>116</sup> Submission 34: Kimberley Group Training

<sup>117</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

<sup>118</sup> Submission 57: NSW Aboriginal Land Council

<sup>119</sup> Submission 32

<sup>120</sup> Submission 34: Kimberley Group Training

<sup>121</sup> Submission 39: Halls Creek Shire

<sup>122</sup> Submission 4: East Kimberley Job Pathways

<sup>123</sup> Submission 35: RAW Group of Companies

<sup>124</sup> Submission 24: North Coast Aboriginal Development Alliance

<sup>125</sup> Submission 12: Kajarinya Training Organisation

<sup>126</sup> Submission 26: Advance Personnel Management

<sup>127</sup> Submission 23: Real Futures

<sup>128</sup> Submission 17: WSP Australia PTY LTD

<sup>129</sup> Submission 46: Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation

<sup>130</sup> Submission 12: Kajarinya Training Organisation

flexibility to facilitate Indigenous co-design and leadership in their construction for community needs and aspirations.<sup>131,132,133,134,135,136</sup>

Another major recommendation made by several respondents in response to Discussion Question 2 was for the ISEP to create training and employment 'hubs' in each region/locality that brings stakeholders together in locally-specific ways. This suggestion is taken up further in response to Discussion Question 4, below.

ISEP needs to create simple administrative processes and ensure funding accessibility for Indigenous applicants

Numerous respondents pointed to the need for both ISEP and IAS funding to be made simple, flexible, clear, and accessible for all stakeholders in locally-specific ways.<sup>137,138,139</sup> This includes a focus on streamlining reporting procedures, funding emphasis on employment outcomes over inputs, incentivising the ongoing support of Indigenous employees, reducing lengthy and arduous layers of approval needed for accessing those funds, and the swift delivery of outcomes to ensure key job opportunities are not missed for participants of Indigenous-specific employment services.<sup>140,141,142,143</sup> Contracts and tenders, several respondents note, should be prioritised for and subsequently awarded to Indigenous businesses and ACCOs for Indigenous-led decision making, goals, and outcomes,<sup>144,145,146</sup> particularly in remote and regional settings, to ensure they are competitive with non-Indigenous or mainstream employers and service providers in accessing IAS funding.<sup>147,148,149</sup>

These arrangements could also request all mainstream service providers and non-Indigenous employers include evidence of seeking input and ongoing consultation with Indigenous community representatives and ACCOs to feed into their outcomes as a collaboration measure prior to accessing ISEP funding.<sup>150,151,152,153</sup> Further, employers could be asked to invest directly in to the retention of Indigenous employees under NIAA's direction in negotiation of such arrangements.<sup>154</sup> Several respondents also pointed to the rollout of the IAS, and the subsequent reports by the Australian National Audit Office, for guidance on how to best ensure ACCOs are preference in such streamlined administration processes under the ISEP.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Submission 31: Indigenous Allied Health Australia LTD

<sup>132</sup> Submission 32

<sup>133</sup> Submission 45: Aurora Education Foundation

<sup>134</sup> Submission 38: Kapani

<sup>135</sup> Submission 8: Fifteen (15) Times Better

<sup>136</sup> Submission 59: AFL SportsReady

<sup>137</sup> Submission 46: Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation

<sup>138</sup> Submission 4: East Kimberley Job Pathways

<sup>139</sup> Submission 21: Indigenous Australian Leadership Centre

<sup>140</sup> Submission 27: My Pathway

<sup>141</sup> Submission 41

<sup>142</sup> Submission 28: Generation One, Indigenous Employment Partners, and Wirrpanda Foundation

<sup>143</sup> Submission 26: Advance Personnel Management

<sup>144</sup> Submission 48: Aboriginal Executive Council

<sup>145</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

<sup>146</sup> Submission 61: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

<sup>147</sup> Submission 43: The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation

<sup>148</sup> Submission 45: Aurora Education Foundation

<sup>149</sup> Submission 57: NSW Aboriginal Land Council

<sup>150</sup> Submission 26: Advance Personnel Management

<sup>151</sup> Submission 2: NORTEC

<sup>152</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

<sup>153</sup> Submission 57: NSW Aboriginal Land Council

<sup>154</sup> Submission 8: Fifteen (15) Times Better

<sup>155</sup> Submission 48: Aboriginal Executive Council

### Discussion Question 3: How should results of the new ISEP program be measured, monitored and evaluated to ensure investment contributes to closing the gap in employment outcomes?

In the third Discussion Question, NIAA asked prospective respondents:

How should results of the new ISEP program be measured, monitored and evaluated to ensure investment contributes to closing the gap in employment outcomes?

- a. NIAA is interested in stakeholders' views on how Indigenous-specific employment investment should be monitored and meaningful data collected and made accessible to demonstrate clear outcomes.<sup>156</sup>

#### **Key Insight 13**

#### **Indigenous-owned and -controlled data gathering and evaluation in local contexts and culturally specific ways is vital for measuring the impact of the ISEP**

For the ISEP to have maximum impact, the way in which 'success' is both understood and measured should be determined by Indigenous communities. NIAA could provide support and training to ensure 'person-centred' evaluation is able to be undertaken by ACCOs and Indigenous-controlled employment services to best reflect Indigenous employee and community needs and aspirations.

ACCOs should be supported and funded to run their own evaluations within local context/regions to better reflect contextual results of ISEP's impact

With no "universal metric to measure the success of an ISEP provider", respondents recognised the need for locally-specific qualitative and quantitative measures of success for each Indigenous employee and service participant as determined by Indigenous communities themselves.<sup>157</sup> Respondents recommended NIAA provide training, resources, and assistance to local Indigenous communities and ACCOs to take control of data gathering and evaluation processes for the ISEP to reflect the aspirations, needs, and what is considered 'value' as defined by local Indigenous community contexts rather than only those of NIAA and the Commonwealth.<sup>158,159,160</sup>

Such a process, several respondents recommended, would also allow for Indigenous voices to be at the centre of program evaluation, and for local and cultural specificity to emerge in assessments of the ISEP's success. This included stratification of types of employment contracts, industries, funding and service delivery in the region, the identification of barriers to employment, and weather-related site shutdowns.<sup>161,162,163</sup> With ACCOs and PBCs<sup>164</sup> then also able to control what is being evaluated, respondents argued, this would ensure their Indigenous data sovereignty was guaranteed within the ISEP's processes.<sup>165,166,167</sup>

<sup>156</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), *Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (ISEP): Discussion Paper*, NIAA, 2021, Australian Government, p. 9.

<sup>157</sup> Submission 35: RAW Group of Companies, p. 4

<sup>158</sup> Submission 31: Indigenous Allied Health Australia LTD

<sup>159</sup> Submission 54: Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Empowered Communities

<sup>160</sup> Submission 57: NSW Aboriginal Land Council

<sup>161</sup> Submission 45: Aurora Education Foundation

<sup>162</sup> Submission 9: RISE Ventures

<sup>163</sup> Submission 55: Kimberley Regional Group and Kimberley Zone

<sup>164</sup> Submission 40: National Native Title Council

<sup>165</sup> Submission 28: Generation One, Indigenous Employment Partners, and Wirrpanda Foundation

<sup>166</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

<sup>167</sup> Submission 61: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

Working with Indigenous communities and people to collect up-to-date data across locally determined employment measures should be undertaken, managed, and utilised by ACCOs as primary drivers at the beginning of each project, rather than set and controlled by government and NIAA, for “success” in the ISEP to be measured according to local and cultural specificities.<sup>168,169,170,171,172</sup>

This could include:

- Producing national and employer-level figures of Indigenous hiring and retention.
- Publishing key industry and employer opportunities, job losses, and funding rates.
- Creating and publishing ongoing annual surveys of the experiences of Indigenous employees and their employers administered by an Indigenous expert panel.<sup>173,174</sup>
- Rates of participation by Indigenous Australians in each of the local iterations of the program.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) created and assessed by local Indigenous communities.
- Continuous feedback loops for all stakeholders, including NIAA.<sup>175</sup>

Additionally, in this model, respondents recommended mainstream job service providers and non-Indigenous employers who accessed the ISEP be held to specific measures of success and rigorous accountability measures throughout their service provision as determined by and within local Indigenous community and regional contexts.<sup>176,177,178,179</sup>

ISEP needs to use person-centred evaluation beyond the quantitative and the pre-existing 26-week milestone with and for Indigenous employees

Several respondents also highlighted how evaluation and measurements of effectiveness should be simple and accessible without adding another layer of administrative burden, in particular for local Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.<sup>180</sup> A “people first” approach was recommended by several respondents, where evaluative focus should be on who received what practical assistance towards employment, and how effective was this for an Indigenous jobseeker, employee, and the community at large.<sup>181,182</sup>

Focusing on practice within particular contexts through case studies, including what works for people in a strength-based approach to data acquisition and analysis, as opposed to quantitative measurements of retention at the 26-week milestone, respondents argue, will also result in more detailed qualitative descriptions of ISEP outcomes for ongoing/future policy development.<sup>183,184,185</sup>

A broader and detailed set of performance measures appropriate for the ISEP could also include:

- Engagement and quality of service provision.
- Skills and upskilling measures.

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<sup>168</sup> Submission 28: Generation One, Indigenous Employment Partners, and Wirrpanda Foundation

<sup>169</sup> Submission 52: Woolworths Group

<sup>170</sup> Submission 54: Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Empowered Communities

<sup>171</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

<sup>172</sup> Submission 58: Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

<sup>173</sup> Submission 20: Jumbunna Institute

<sup>174</sup> Submission 28: Generation One, Indigenous Employment Partners, and Wirrpanda Foundation

<sup>175</sup> Submission 34: Kimberley Group Training

<sup>176</sup> Submission 31: Indigenous Allied Health Australia LTD

<sup>177</sup> Submission 8: Fifteen (15) Times Better

<sup>178</sup> Submission 31: Indigenous Allied Health Australia LTD

<sup>179</sup> Submission 61: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

<sup>180</sup> Submission 4: East Kimberley Job Pathways

<sup>181</sup> Submission 32

<sup>182</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

<sup>183</sup> Submission 4: East Kimberley Job Pathways

<sup>184</sup> Submission 52: Woolworths Group

<sup>185</sup> Submission 41

- Uptake of individualised mentoring plans.
- Social measures and how well services support Indigenous jobseekers for job readiness by addressing specific social issues and complex needs.
- Job placement ratios.
- Employment relative to education measures.<sup>186,187</sup>

Further additional data points for service providers could be installed (4, 12, 18, and 26 weeks) along with greater funding beyond the 26-week milestone,<sup>188</sup> for better retention of jobs for participants in Indigenous-specific employment programs.<sup>189</sup>

Several respondents also recommended reporting to be transparent and disseminated back to partners in an ongoing loop “with a focus on ways to continuously improve project outcomes”.<sup>190</sup> Such processes could be enacted through a new online portal and dashboard for ease of access, transparency, and future collaborative analysis between NIAA and partners in future stakeholder meetings.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions, p. 7

<sup>187</sup> Submission 51: yourtown

<sup>188</sup> Submission 27: My Pathway

<sup>189</sup> Submission 2: NORTEC

<sup>190</sup> Submission 26: Advance Personnel Management, p. 26

<sup>191</sup> Submission 46: Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation

#### Discussion Question 4: How can we embed shared-decision making in community-based workforce planning?

In the fourth Discussion Question, NIAA asked prospective respondents:

How can we embed shared-decision making in community-based workforce planning?

- b. NIAA is interested in identifying the opportunities for partnerships with appropriate stakeholders in the employment space, and how shared decision-making can be best facilitated, for example through community-based workforce planning.<sup>192</sup>

#### Key Insight 10

##### The ISEP design and implementation should include Indigenous Australians and communities as co-designers and partners in specific local contexts

For the ISEP to achieve success, Indigenous Australians and organisations should be in deep collaboration with government and decision-makers at the local level. Increased funding for ongoing service provision that recognises local and cultural contexts regarding employment, training and relationships between industry and government was considered vital by stakeholders.

Greater and sustained investment and procurement of ACCOs and Indigenous community-controlled employment and specialist support services in partnerships with NIAA for ISEP

The majority of respondents placed a strong emphasis on their imagining of the central role for ACCOs in the rollout of the ISEP.<sup>193,194,195</sup> ACCOs, respondents articulated, would provide the ISEP with the capacity to give Indigenous communities a clear role in partnership and co-design, and embed shared decision making in the development, rollout, and evaluation of Indigenous-specific employment services towards a principle of self-determination.<sup>196,197,198</sup> ACCOs represent the specifics and complexities of the Indigenous communities from which they emerge, and with which they work, and respondents posit could be in direct negotiation and partnership with employers in the development of community-based workforce planning and service provision more generally.<sup>199,200,201,202</sup>

Service delivery contracts could also include provisions that require providers and communities to collaborate within specific local/regional contexts in order to deliver place-based solutions to Indigenous employment needs.<sup>203,204</sup> Doing so, as one respondent makes clear, would also position Indigenous-controlled services as a key partner in all Indigenous-specific employment service provision and facilitate the partnerships envisioned by the National Plan, particularly Priority Reform One: *Shared Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making*, and Two: *Building the Community-Controlled Sector*.<sup>205</sup>

<sup>192</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), *Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (ISEP): Discussion Paper*, NIAA, 2021, Australian Government, p. 9.

<sup>193</sup> Submission 54: Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Empowered Communities

<sup>194</sup> Submission 56: Reading Writing Hotline

<sup>195</sup> Submission 38: Kapani

<sup>196</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

<sup>197</sup> Submission 48: Aboriginal Executive Council

<sup>198</sup> Submission 58: Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

<sup>199</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

<sup>200</sup> Submission 31: Indigenous Allied Health Australia LTD.

<sup>201</sup> Submission 24: North Coast Aboriginal Development Alliance

<sup>202</sup> Submission 55: Kimberley Regional Group and Kimberley Zone

<sup>203</sup> Submission 11: Yalu Aboriginal Corporation

<sup>204</sup> Submission 4: East Kimberley Job Pathways

<sup>205</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

Establishment of local one-stop, Indigenous-specific employee project management groups in each region that brings local employers, services, and jobseekers together

Many respondents requested that NIAA support the creation of coordinated, community-based locally- and culturally-specific 'Job Councils'. This would allow for collaboration and partnership between all major stakeholders in the ISEP – Indigenous communities, employees, employers, and jobseekers, along with local Indigenous-controlled employment services and support (including ACCOs and ATSICHHOs) and mainstream employers and service providers.<sup>206,207,208,209,210,211,212</sup>

Such an approach to one-stop project management groups, respondents posit, would allow for:

- The creation of industry training partnerships and targeted employment programs to address gaps identified by all stakeholders as Indigenous community-led solutions at the local level.<sup>213,214</sup>
- Better community-based workforce planning at the beginning of projects in concert with community aspirations, needs, and wants, along with local employers and industry opportunities in the region, to develop partnerships of trust between all parties as local employment opportunities emerge.<sup>215,216,217,218,219</sup>
- Coordination of a workforce development approach that was informed by the community context within a culturally safe framework, including all project applications, approvals, delivery, and subsequent evaluation of the results.<sup>220,221,222</sup>
- Further collaboration with specific industries in the area, small to large business, and local governments to understand how to create effective employment pathways and careers for Indigenous employees with an ongoing feedback loop which seeks to overcome ongoing employment barriers.<sup>223,224,225</sup>
- Existing rights and arrangements with current and potential employers of Indigenous Australians, specifically through native title determinations and the Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs), to benefit Indigenous employees in partnership with both NIAA and employers.<sup>226</sup>
- The ability to maximise specific traditional land management techniques, and even the broader culture-based economy, to be further incorporated and bolstered in each region by the ISEP.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Submission 8: Fifteen (15) Times Better

<sup>207</sup> Submission 26: Advance Personnel Management

<sup>208</sup> Submission 28: Generation One, Indigenous Employment Partners, and Wirrpanda Foundation

<sup>209</sup> Submission 23: Real Futures

<sup>210</sup> Submission 38: Kapani

<sup>211</sup> Submission 34: Kimberley Training Group

<sup>212</sup> Submission 58: Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

<sup>213</sup> Submission 42: First Nations Media Australia

<sup>214</sup> Submission 9: RISE Ventures

<sup>215</sup> Submission 8: Fifteen (15) Times Better

<sup>216</sup> Submission 24: North Coast Aboriginal Development Alliance

<sup>217</sup> Submission 46: Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation

<sup>218</sup> Submission 35: RAW Group of Companies

<sup>219</sup> Submission 57: NSW Aboriginal Land Council

<sup>220</sup> Submission 9: RISE Ventures

<sup>221</sup> Submission 26: Advance Personnel Management

<sup>222</sup> Submission 31: Indigenous Allied Health Australia LTD

<sup>223</sup> Submission 41

<sup>224</sup> Submission 32

<sup>225</sup> Submission 35: RAW Group of Companies

<sup>226</sup> Submission 40: National Native Title Council

<sup>227</sup> Submission 15: Indigenous Land & Sea Corporation

## Discussion Question 5: How can the ISEP encourage potential employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to provide safe and culturally appropriate work environments? How can employers better value the skills and perspectives of Indigenous employees?

In the fifth Discussion Question, NIAA asked prospective respondents:

How can the ISEP encourage potential employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to provide safe and culturally appropriate work environments? How can employers better value the skills and perspectives of Indigenous employees?

- a. NIAA is interested in understanding how all employers, including Indigenous employers and SMEs, can be supported to further employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.<sup>228</sup>

### **Key Insights 6 & 14**

#### **Ensuring and positively obligating cultural safety in the workplace should be a critical feature of the ISEP**

Building cultural safety in the workplace is critical to successful outcomes of the new ISEP. This includes positive obligations on employers to make workplaces culturally safe, a view that was strongly expressed by industry leaders. Stakeholders agreed that ACCOs and Indigenous communities must play a key role in this and that employers require support, training, accreditation, and positive obligations to develop such measures within local Indigenous community contexts.

#### **Culturally safe workplaces need to be 'ready' for Indigenous employees and encouraged and obligated through the ISEP and Federal Government mechanisms**

Cultural safety and capability measures need to be facilitated by all key stakeholders – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and controlled-organisations, employers, service providers, and NIAA – to ensure culturally safe and competent workplaces for Indigenous employees to successfully sustain jobs and careers.

The ISEP should actively promote culturally safe workplaces through positive obligations

Many respondents reported that a major obstacle for Indigenous employees is in working within environments that are characterised as culturally unsafe (i.e. lacking cultural competency and capability), through to prejudice and/or racism being present in the workplace.<sup>229,230,231,232,233,234,235</sup>

Respondents argued that much could be done to assist employers in creating sustainable culturally safe workplaces that are sustainable in the long term, including:

- Compulsory cultural safety and capability training and a commitment to undertake measures to eliminate racism in the workplace for any organisation that accesses Indigenous-specific funding under the ISEP, which includes Indigenous community

<sup>228</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), *Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (ISEP): Discussion Paper*, NIAA, 2021, Australian Government, p. 9.

<sup>229</sup> Submission 5: Volunteers Australia

<sup>230</sup> Submission 35: RAW Group of Companies

<sup>231</sup> Submission 10: University NSW Sydney

<sup>232</sup> Submission 20: Jumbunna Institute

<sup>233</sup> Submission 50: Reconciliation Australia

<sup>234</sup> Submission 58: Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

<sup>235</sup> Submission 61: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

representatives, employers, and service providers as partners in the design and rollout.<sup>236,237,238,239,240,241,242,243,244,245,246,247</sup>

- Cultural safety and capability training requirements for employers and mainstream service providers to be facilitated through/created under national government accreditation schemes which includes Indigenous community representatives, employers, and service providers as partners in the design and rollout.<sup>248,249</sup>
- Developing programs for employers that incorporate an “embedded understanding of the impact of historical and modern challenges faced by a number of Indigenous Australians, including intergenerational trauma, socio-economic disadvantage and negative schooling experiences, and how these challenges can lead to difficulties with seeking and maintaining employment.”<sup>250</sup>
- Cultural safety and capacity could also be incorporated into funding agreements, for those accessing the ISEP and providing Indigenous-specific services with regular independent assessment regarding suitability.<sup>251</sup>
- Practical examples should be modelled for employees and employers, including through mentorship and modelling,<sup>252,253</sup> but also through highly accessible formats such as “video interviews and online seminars.”<sup>254</sup>
- Cultural safety and capability should be formulated by Indigenous staff, community feedback and Traditional Owners and in alignment with the National Agreement and principles of self-determination.<sup>255</sup>
- ACCOs, Indigenous Group Training Organisations, and Indigenous-controlled employment services can provide said training in partnership with NIAA and local employers in their local context.<sup>256,257</sup>
- Legislative change to formally recognise leave entitlements to include cultural obligations for Indigenous employees<sup>258</sup>
- Provide and support existing mental health support mechanisms for Indigenous employees that experience racism in the workplace.<sup>259</sup>

Increased funding needed for Indigenous employers and Indigenous-specific employment service providers

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<sup>236</sup> Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Empowered Communities

<sup>237</sup> Submission 20: Jumbunna Institute

<sup>238</sup> Submission 26: Advance Personnel Management

<sup>239</sup> Submission 28: Generation One, Indigenous Employment Partners, and Wirrpanda Foundation

<sup>240</sup> Submission 32

<sup>241</sup> Submission 8: Fifteen (15) Times Better

<sup>242</sup> Submission 41

<sup>243</sup> Submission 33: Minerals Council of Australia

<sup>244</sup> Submission 29: National Apprentice Employment Network

<sup>245</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

<sup>246</sup> Submission 47: Crown Perth LTD

<sup>247</sup> Submission 23: Real Futures

<sup>248</sup> Submission 1: Jobs Australia

<sup>249</sup> Submission 58: Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

<sup>250</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, p. 4

<sup>251</sup> Submission 31: Indigenous Allied Health Australia LTD

<sup>252</sup> Submission 34: Kimberley Group Training

<sup>253</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

<sup>254</sup> Submission 55: Kimberley Regional Group and Kimberley Zone

<sup>255</sup> Submission 9: RISE Ventures

<sup>256</sup> Submission 31: Indigenous Allied Health Australia LTD

<sup>257</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

<sup>258</sup> Submission 62: Tranby National Indigenous Adult Education and Training

<sup>259</sup> Submission 20: Jumbunna Institute

Respondents also called for increased funding and support for pre-existing Indigenous employers themselves to provide culturally safe and appropriate employment for Indigenous jobseekers.<sup>260,261,262</sup> In competitive tendering processes with non-Indigenous employers, Indigenous businesses and employers – many of which are noted as providing long-term stable jobs for Indigenous jobseekers<sup>263</sup> – are also burdened with the extra costs of supporting those staff members, and in turn, the ISEP needs to recognise this in prioritising Indigenous employment.<sup>264</sup> Further development of Indigenous-specific programs and Indigenous Owned Registered Training Organisations for long-term unemployed jobseekers was also recognised as a necessity and opportunity for building confidence and providing support for community members.<sup>265,266</sup>

Employers need to be responsible to be ‘ready’ for Indigenous employees with greater awareness, support, and accessibility through NIAA

Rather than the individual Indigenous employee being responsible for cultural change within the organisation, employers were recommended by a range of respondents to focus on their “workplace readiness and cultural safety”.<sup>267</sup> Greater resources are needed for all employers to further support their Indigenous employees, often in structural and social barriers to accessing work (including housing, accommodation, access to transport, family care roles etc.),<sup>268,269</sup> the need for training on the job, extra language translation services (and the incorporation of language in the workforce), and the funding provision of space and time to facilitate an employee’s cultural needs and obligations without overburdening individual employers.<sup>270,271</sup>

Further recognition of the value Indigenous employees bring to non-Indigenous employers was also emphasised by several respondents, in their skills and experiences for the workplace, but also in the community benefits that result from maintaining employment.<sup>272,273,274</sup> This could include Indigenous-led mentorship that delivers how-to programs for non-Indigenous employers to create further awareness, education, and practical support.<sup>275</sup> Further support for wrap-around programs for Indigenous employees, including specific cultural support, family safety support, and flexible working arrangements and leave entitlements, would further assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and their participation in the workforce.<sup>276,277</sup>

Employers should aim to provide clear and supportive school-to-training-to-job pathways

Respondents also pointed to the need for employers to be encouraged by government through the ISEP to support the transition between school, specific training outcomes such as traineeships and apprenticeships, completing higher education, and through to ongoing

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<sup>260</sup> Submission 28: Generation One, Indigenous Employment Partners, and Wirrpanda Foundation

<sup>261</sup> Submission 43: The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation

<sup>262</sup> Submission 40: National Native Title Council

<sup>263</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

<sup>264</sup> Submission 43: The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation, p. 2.

<sup>265</sup> Submission 1: East Kimberley Job Pathways

<sup>266</sup> Submission 62: Tranby National Indigenous Adult Education and Training

<sup>267</sup> Submission 28: Generation One, Indigenous Employment Partners, and Wirrpanda Foundation

<sup>268</sup> Submission 54: Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Empowered Communities

<sup>269</sup> Submission 57: NSW Aboriginal Land Council

<sup>270</sup> Submission 43: The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation

<sup>271</sup> Submission 38: Kapani

<sup>272</sup> Submission 10: University NSW Sydney

<sup>273</sup> Submission 24: North Coast Aboriginal Development Alliance

<sup>274</sup> Submission 54: Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Empowered Communities

<sup>275</sup> Submission 34: Kimberley Group Training, p. 2

<sup>276</sup> Submission 37: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

<sup>277</sup> Submission 31: Indigenous Allied Health Australia LTD

employment.<sup>278,279,280,281,282,283,284</sup> Several respondents emphasised the need for local job providers, industry representatives, and ACCOs to collaborate on these pathways to ensure ongoing employment matches with sustainable long-term career development in specific local contexts.<sup>285,286,287</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Submission 22: National Rugby League

<sup>279</sup> Submission 24: North Coast Aboriginal Development Alliance

<sup>280</sup> Submission 19: Universities Australia

<sup>281</sup> Submission 33: Minerals Council of Australia

<sup>282</sup> Submission 49: Charles Darwin University

<sup>283</sup> Submission 58: Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Service

<sup>284</sup> Submission 61: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

<sup>285</sup> Submission 46: Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation

<sup>286</sup> Submission 42: First Nations Media Australia

<sup>287</sup> Submission 60

## Discussion Question 6: How Should the ISEP Consider a Local Focus?

In the sixth and final Discussion Question, NIAA asked prospective respondents:

How should the ISEP consider a local focus?

- NIAA is interested in stakeholders' views on whether defined boundaries required for the ISEP, or whether applicants for funding under the ISEP, are best placed to determine the local region within the context of a specific funding proposal?<sup>288</sup>

### **Key Insights 4, 5, & 15**

#### **The ISEP should be flexible, place-based, community-led and client-focused**

The ISEP should be flexible, support local approaches, and avoid 'one size fits all' funding arrangements. Within the context of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, participants emphasised the importance of NIAA undertaking collaboration on community-led and -designed solutions to achieve outcomes for Indigenous jobseekers appropriate to specific cultural and regional contexts.

#### **The ISEP should promote local, place-based training that is reflective of specific social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the regions**

Employment programs under the ISEP should incorporate culturally specific training and education pathways that reflect the community in which they are based. This includes flexibility around how services are delivered, linkages to employment opportunities in the region, support services delivered in language appropriate to the community, and increased funding to provide ongoing assistance beyond the current standard of 26-weeks.

#### **Indigenous community-led definition of local viewed as key to the ISEP success**

What was considered 'local' for Indigenous communities, ACCOs, and Traditional Owner groups may look very different to the regional approach of both mainstream employers and government. The former's conception of community and locality should take priority in the construction of service delivery boundaries.

Not 'one size fits all' – Indigenous applicants, through ACCOs and Traditional Owners, should define boundaries

Respondents articulated a need for the ISEP to be fluid enough to work at the local level with Indigenous communities with specific needs via "custom-designed approach[es]" that are able to recognise the complexities of local "environmental, logistical, economic, and cultural issues".<sup>289</sup> The imperative for several respondents was that the ISEP would have more efficacy if it did not to adopt a one size fits all approach to funding and program delivery.<sup>290,291,292,293</sup> Importantly, several participants articulated how critical it was for local Indigenous communities – particularly ACCOs and Indigenous-controlled employment organisations – to define their own boundaries, choose

<sup>288</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), *Indigenous Skills, Engagement and Employment Program (ISEP): Discussion Paper*, NIAA, 2021, Australian Government, p. 9

<sup>289</sup> Submission 54: Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Empowered Communities, p. 26

<sup>290</sup> Submission 32

<sup>291</sup> Submission 33: Minerals Council of Australia

<sup>292</sup> Submission 49: Charles Darwin University

<sup>293</sup> Submission 3: The Australia Institute

their own providers to administer the ISEP within these boundaries, and that their service provision focused on meeting community-specific wants and needs.<sup>294,295,296,297,298,299,300</sup>

ACCOs were considered by many respondents to be central to definitions of local community, recognised as being culturally-appropriate, extremely responsive to local contexts, and as having strong pre-existing relationships with Indigenous community members.<sup>301,302,303,304</sup> For many respondents, particularly within the context of the Government's commitments in the National Agreement, ACCOs are thus perfectly positioned to administer the ISEP with and for their own definitions of the local Indigenous community.<sup>305,306,307,308</sup> Doing so, as one respondent noted, would also allow for the development of trusting relationships between "local providers, industry, and stakeholder groups to work together to skill up and train Aboriginal jobseekers... [and] should be delivered in line with local workforce needs with the understanding that each labour market is unique".<sup>309</sup>

However, some respondents recognised the potential strain between nationally led programs aiming to deliver locally focused, complex employment services, and the potential limitations inherent in a national approach to Indigenous employment services.<sup>310</sup> Such a decision would be best determined, respondents argued, through a rigorous evaluation of current and previous Indigenous-specific training and employment programs.<sup>311,312,313</sup>

#### Use or create a single coordinator for each region

In line with responses to Discussion Questions 2 and 4, another suggestion from several participants was to establish a "singular co-ordinated connection" or "Local Decision Making forums" to represent the needs of the community that would facilitate the ISEP and the New Remote Engagement Program (NREP) and assist local Indigenous community access to the program, facilitate community engagement and consultation, and all within an understanding of the particular priorities and needs of local communities.<sup>314,315</sup> Others pointed to the pre-existing regional coordination by CDP Regions, Local Decision Making organisations (NSW Government), VTEC service boundaries, and the reintroduction of Community Action Plans (CAP's), for example, as a way to start this process quickly, with the ability to extend boundaries for specific community and industry needs across multiple regions.<sup>316,317,318,319</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

<sup>295</sup> Submission 62: Tranby National Indigenous Adult Education and Training

<sup>296</sup> Submission 15: Indigenous Land & Sea Corporation

<sup>297</sup> Submission 45: Aurora Education Foundation

<sup>298</sup> Submission 32

<sup>299</sup> Submission 57: NSW Aboriginal Land Council

<sup>300</sup> Submission 61: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

<sup>301</sup> Submission 33: Minerals Council of Australia

<sup>302</sup> Submission 28: Generation One, Indigenous Employment Partners, and Wirrpanda Foundation

<sup>303</sup> Submission 34: Kimberley Group Training

<sup>304</sup> Submission 60

<sup>305</sup> Submission 4: East Kimberley Job Pathways

<sup>306</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

<sup>307</sup> Submission 57 NSW Aboriginal Land Council

<sup>308</sup> Submission 60

<sup>309</sup> Submission 46: Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation

<sup>310</sup> Submission 45: Aurora Education Foundation

<sup>311</sup> Submission 31: Indigenous Allied Health Australia LTD

<sup>312</sup> Submission 61: National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

<sup>313</sup> Submission 57: NSW Aboriginal Land Council

<sup>314</sup> Submission 2: NORTEC, p. 2

<sup>315</sup> Submission 1: Jobs Australia

<sup>316</sup> Submission 1: Jobs Australia

<sup>317</sup> Submission 13: Yilabara Solutions

<sup>318</sup> Submission 24: North Coast Aboriginal Development Alliance

<sup>319</sup> Submission 9: RISE Ventures

ISEP needs flexibility for local employers including small-large business

Finally, several respondents also noted the role of major employers in each region too, arguing that the needs of employers must be included in considerations of each local Indigenous community and their specific employment needs and opportunities in differing regions.<sup>320,321,322</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Submission 33: Minerals Council of Australia

<sup>321</sup> Submission 52: Woolworths Group

<sup>322</sup> Submission 39: AFL SportsReady

# Appendix A: Regional Roundtable Agenda example

## Consultation Agenda

### Acknowledgement and welcome

*Hello and welcome, my name is (NIAA rep).*

*The National Indigenous Australians Agency acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the lands we are meeting on today, the (TO name here) people and acknowledges their connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders, past, present and future.*

- Welcome all participants and thank them for attending
- The session will be recorded, but participants will not be named or identified in any way
- We are also taking notes to identify key themes and ideas that come up in our discussions
- We are hoping for a frank and open discussion
- Say one thing about why you think the consultation is important

*Today we're going to outline the new Indigenous Skills and Employment Program and hear your ideas for how a new flexible employment program could have the biggest impact in our region.*

*I'm going to hand over to (facilitator name) our facilitator from Inside Policy for introductions and to talk us through the next couple of hours.*

### Introductions

#### Outline of the roundtable

#### Introduction to ISEP and changes to existing programs

*Today, I'm going to give you a brief outline of the proposed changes to Indigenous-specific employment programs and outline Minister Wyatt's vision for ISEP – how a new, local, flexible model could assist us to close the gap and contribute to economic growth for Indigenous Australians*

*I hope you've had the opportunity to watch Deb Fulton's short presentation on the differences between ISEP, the new employment services model and the proposed new remote engagement program; or you may have read the discussion paper.*

*After the short presentation, we will take a short break then (facilitator first name) will take us through three key questions. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas.*

### Regional reflection

#### Introduction to the activities

*As mentioned earlier we are here today because we would like to hear your ideas for the new program.*

*We will be going through some discussion questions based on the following themes:*

- *Understanding job seekers in these regions need and what success would look like for this program*
- *Opportunities in these regions and what a national approach would look like*
- *Understanding what programs, initiatives and actions would achieve what is needed, for example other cohorts ISEP could target in your region, like students transitioning from school to work/study or entry level workers looking for career advancement opportunities*

*We are going to break into smaller groups to explore the first question. Our scribe (name here) will take you out of the meeting and put you into a small group.*

*Before that happens, have a look in the chat for this meeting for a link to our Mural sheet, click on it and as you talk chose a scribe to record your answers to the question.*

*We'll drop in to see how you are going, and after 10 minutes (scribe name) will bring us back together to talk through what came up for you.*

### **Challenges, barriers and needs**

On the worksheet you will find the following questions.

- What are the barriers to employment?
- What stops people from staying in employment?
- What support do people need to stay in their job?
- How can employers improve their cultural safety?
- What specific groups of jobseekers require specific support?

Debrief prompts

- What are the barriers to finding and getting a job that you talked about?
- What are the barriers to staying in a job that you talked about?
- Who needs support to get and keep a job?

### **Opportunities in this region**

We'll be asking you:

- What are the key opportunities in your region?
- What are the training or employment aspirations of local Indigenous jobseekers or local communities?

Debrief prompts

- Who can tell me about a key opportunity you identified in your discussions?
- Why is this important?
- What is the role of training in making the most of the opportunity?

### **Future success**

*For this last exercise we'd like you to think about the future and what success looks like.*

*Click on the link we are about to post in the chat to go to a worksheet where we will be asking you to think of one idea that you think might be a 'quick win', something that could take a bit longer and more effort but important to do and one idea you would want to do if we had unlimited resources.*

*Use the post-its in Mural to add comments and ideas to the journey. Try and focus on actions and programs that would address the barriers or take advantage of the opportunities we talked about earlier.*

Debrief prompts

- Can someone tell me an idea they wrote or saw on the worksheet that they think is a 'must do'?
- Are there any 'quick wins' that could happen now?
- Who would need to be involved?
- What would have to happen for us to get there?
- What are the priorities?

### **Wrap up and close**

- Thank participants for attending and sharing their knowledge, experience and ideas with us to inform the design of ISEP
- Invite NIAA rep (Regional Manager) to summarise of key themes/things that stood out as important

NIAA rep tells participants:

- Key findings from the consultation will inform the design of the program and will be shared on the website in October
- Thanks participants

Extends invitation to engage with NIAA in the future

### **Debrief**

- What worked, what didn't?
- What should change for future sessions?

What were the key things we heard?

## Appendix B: Roundtable Participant Lists

Table B1: Sequence of Regional Roundtables

No.	Date	Location	Region	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
1	3 Aug	Wagga Wagga	Western NSW	Roundtable	Virtual	30
3	17 Aug	Brisbane	South Queensland	Roundtable	Virtual	36
4	18 Aug	Toowoomba	South Queensland	Roundtable	Hybrid	12
5	18 Aug	Tennant Creek	Central Australia	Roundtable	Virtual	12
6	18 Aug	Toowoomba	South Queensland	Roundtable	Hybrid	12
7	19 Aug	Alice Springs	Central Australia	Roundtable	Virtual	28
8	19 Aug	Victoria	Victoria-Tasmania	Roundtable	Virtual	36
9	20 Aug	Rockhampton	South Queensland	Roundtable	Hybrid	14
10	20 Aug	Rockhampton	South Queensland	Roundtable	Hybrid	11
12	24 Aug	Woorabinda	South Queensland	Roundtable	Hybrid	35
13	24 Aug	Perth	Greater Western Australia	Town Hall	In-person	23
14	24 Aug	Darwin	Top End and Tiwi Islands	Roundtable	In-person	6
15	24 Aug	Darwin	Top End and Tiwi Islands	Roundtable	In-person	10

No.	Date	Location	Region	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
16	25 Aug	Pilbara WA	Greater Western Australia	Roundtable	Virtual	8
17	25 Aug	Goldfields WA	Greater Western Australia	Roundtable	Virtual	3
18	25 Aug	Darwin	Top End and Tiwi Islands	Roundtable	In-person	8
19	25 Aug	Darwin	Top End and Tiwi Islands	Roundtable	Virtual	6
20	26 Aug	Midwest WA	Greater Western Australia	Roundtable	Virtual	7
21	26 Aug	Southwest/ Great Southern WA	Greater Western Australia	Roundtable	Virtual	10
22	26 Aug	Darwin	Top End and Tiwi Islands	Roundtable	In-person	7
23	27 Aug	Darwin	Top End and Tiwi Islands	Town Hall	In-person	5
24	27 Aug	Greater Western Australia	Greater Western Australia	Roundtable	Virtual	6
25	31 Aug	Bendigo VIC	Victoria-Tasmania	Roundtable	Virtual	18
26	1 Sep	Nhulunbuy NT	Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Town Hall	In-person	13
27	1 Sep	Nhulunbuy NT	Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Roundtable	In-person	14
28	2 Sep	Groote Eylandt NT	Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Town Hall	In-person	5
29	2 Sep	National		Roundtable	Virtual	22

No.	Date	Location	Region	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
30	2 Sep	Groote Eylandt NT	Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Roundtable	Virtual	5
31	2 Sep	Derby WA	Kimberley	Roundtable	In-person	6
32	3 Sep	Broome WA	Kimberley	Roundtable	In-person	13
33	6 Sep	Kununurra WA	Kimberley	Roundtable	In-person	10
34	7 Sep	Adelaide	South Australia	Roundtable	Virtual	38
35	8 Sep	Adelaide SA	South Australia	Roundtable	Virtual	38
36	9 Sep	Port Augusta SA	South Australia	Roundtable	Virtual	24
37	9 Sep	Maningrida NT	Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt	Roundtable	In-person	8
39	10 Sep	Cairns QLD	North Queensland	Roundtable	In-person	28
40	13 Sep	NSW South Coast	Eastern New South Wales	Roundtable	Virtual	12
41	14 Sep	NSW South Coast	Eastern New South Wales	Roundtable	Virtual	9
42	14 Sep	Sydney NSW	Eastern New South Wales	Roundtable	Virtual	15
43	14 Sep	Mount Isa QLD	North Queensland	Roundtable	In-person	15
44	15 Sep	Townsville QLD	North Queensland	Roundtable	In-person	24

No.	Date	Location	Region	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
45	15 Sep	Townsville QLD	North Queensland	Roundtable	In-person	25
46	15 Sep	Hobart TAS	Victoria-Tasmania	Roundtable	Virtual	14
47	15 Sep	Hobart TAS	Victoria-Tasmania	Roundtable	Virtual	13
48	16 Sep	Sydney NSW	Eastern New South Wales	Roundtable	Virtual	12
49	16 Sep	Sydney NSW	Eastern New South Wales	Roundtable	Virtual	21
50	16 Sep	Mackay QLD	North Queensland	Roundtable	In-person	17
51	17 Sep	NSW North Coast	Eastern New South Wales	Roundtable	Virtual	8
52	17 Sep	Empowered Communities (National)		Roundtable	Virtual	12
53	17 Sep	Empowered Communities NSW	Eastern New South Wales	Roundtable	Virtual	27

**Table B2: Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt Region**

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
26	1 Sep	Nhulunbuy NT	Town Hall	In-person	13
27	1 Sep	Nhulunbuy NT	Roundtable	In-person	14
28	2 Sep	Groote Eylandt NT	Town Hall	In-person	5

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
30	2 Sep	Groote Eylandt NT	Roundtable	Virtual	7
37	9 Sep	Maningrida NT	Roundtable	In-person	8

**Table B3: Top End and Tiwi Islands Region**

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
14	24 Aug	Darwin	Roundtable	In-person	6
15	24 Aug	Darwin	Roundtable	In-person	10
18	25 Aug	Darwin	Roundtable	In-person	8
19	25 Aug	Darwin	Roundtable	Virtual	6
22	26 Aug	Darwin	Roundtable	In-person	7
23	27 Aug	Darwin	Town Hall	In-person	5

**Table B4: Central Australia Region**

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
5	18 Aug	Tennant Creek	Roundtable	Virtual	12
7	19 Aug	Alice Springs	Roundtable	Virtual	28

**Table B5: Greater Western Australia Region**

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
13	24 Aug	Perth	Town Hall	In-person	23
16	25 Aug	Pilbara WA	Roundtable	Virtual	8
17	25 Aug	Goldfields WA	Roundtable	Virtual	3
20	26 Aug	Midwest WA	Roundtable	Virtual	7
21	26 Aug	Southwest/ Great Southern WA	Roundtable	Virtual	10
24	27 Aug	Greater Western Australia	Roundtable	Virtual	6

**Table B6: Kimberley Region**

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
31	2 Sep	Derby WA	Roundtable	In-person	6
32	3 Sep	Broome WA	Roundtable	In-person	13
33	6 Sep	Kununurra WA	Roundtable	In-person	10

**Table B7: South Queensland Region**

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
2	17 Aug	Brisbane	Roundtable	Virtual	23
3	17 Aug	Brisbane	Roundtable	Virtual	36
4	18 Aug	Toowoomba	Roundtable	Hybrid	12
6	18 Aug	Toowoomba	Roundtable	Hybrid	12
9	20 Aug	Rockhampton	Roundtable	Hybrid	14
10	20 Aug	Rockhampton	Roundtable	Hybrid	11
12	24 Aug	Woorabinda	Roundtable	Hybrid	35

**Table B8: North Queensland Region**

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
36	10 Sep	Cairns QLD	Roundtable	In-person	28
40	14 Sep	Mount Isa QLD	Roundtable	In-person	15
41	15 Sep	Townsville QLD	Roundtable	In-person	24
42	15 Sep	Townsville QLD	Roundtable	In-person	25
47	16 Sep	Mackay QLD	Roundtable	In-person	17

**Table B9: Victoria-Tasmania Region**

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
8	19 Aug	Victoria	Roundtable	Virtual	36
25	31 Aug	Bendigo VIC	Roundtable	Virtual	18
46	15 Sep	Hobart TAS	Roundtable	Virtual	14
47	15 Sep	Hobart TAS	Roundtable	Virtual	13

**Table B10: Eastern New South Wales Region**

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
40	13 Sep	NSW South Coast	Roundtable	Virtual	17
41	14 Sep	NSW South Coast	Roundtable	Virtual	23
42	14 Sep	Sydney NSW	Roundtable	Virtual	23
48	16 Sep	Sydney NSW	Roundtable	Virtual	29
49	16 Sep	Sydney NSW	Roundtable	Virtual	13
51	17 Sep	NSW North Coast	Roundtable	Virtual	12
53	17 Sep	Empowered Communities NSW	Roundtable	Virtual	24

**Table B11: Western NSW**

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
1	3 Aug	Wagga Wagga	Roundtable	Virtual	31

**Table B12: South Australia Region**

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
34	7 Sep	Adelaide	Roundtable	Virtual	38
35	8 Sep	Adelaide SA	Roundtable	Virtual	38
36	9 Sep	Port Augusta SA	Roundtable	Virtual	24

**Table B13: National**

No.	Date	Location	Style	Mode	No. of Participants
29	2 Sep	National	Roundtable	Virtual	21
52	17 Sep	Empowered Communities (National)	Roundtable	Virtual	12

**Table B14: Individual participants**

Organisation	Roundtable
Adelaide North, LGP	Adelaide
AIS SA	Adelaide
Anglicare SA	Adelaide
Status Employment Services for the Adelaide North	Adelaide
ASG Group	Adelaide
Barda V Col	Adelaide
BLCW Program	Adelaide
Boweng	Adelaide
Complete Personnel Group	Adelaide
Civil Apprenticeships and Careers Ltd	Adelaide
Complete Personnel	Adelaide
Curriculum and Learning Division, Schools SA	Adelaide
Data Com	Adelaide
Aboriginal Services, AnglicareSA	Adelaide
Downer Group	Adelaide
DPC AAR	Adelaide
Employment Facilitator	Adelaide
Employment Facilitator for Adelaide North	Adelaide
Employment Facilitator Mid North and Upper Spencer Gulf	Adelaide
Department for Innovation and Skills	Adelaide
InComPro Aboriginal Association	Adelaide
Indigenous Training and Recruitment	Adelaide
KPMG	Adelaide
Aboriginal Access Centre TAFE SA	Adelaide
Maxima	Adelaide
Moore SA NT	Adelaide
MTL Consulting	Adelaide
Native Title SA	Adelaide
Eyre/North West Country SA - Complete Personnel Group	Adelaide
Pepsi Co	Adelaide
MADEC Australia	Adelaide
Skills and Workforce Capability, Department for Innovation and Skills	Adelaide
PW2PA	Adelaide
Rainy Day Recruitment	Adelaide
Reconciliations SA	Adelaide
Regional Anangu Services Aboriginal Corporation (RASAC	Adelaide
SA Government	Adelaide
Department of Education, Skills and Employment	Adelaide
SA Water	Adelaide
Salvation Army	Adelaide
Local Jobs Program	Adelaide
SYC	Adelaide
Tauondi SA	Adelaide
USG Employment	Adelaide
Workskill Australia	Adelaide
WSP	Adelaide
Zancott Recruitment	Adelaide
CLC	Alice Springs
Bachelor Institute	Alice Springs

Organisation	Roundtable
Batchelor Institute	Alice Springs
CAAC	Alice Springs
Catholic Care	Alice Springs
Desert Knowledge Australia	Alice Springs
CLC Employment Facilitator	Alice Springs
CLC Ranger Program	Alice Springs
NT Chamber of Commerce	Alice Springs
DOH Central Desert Regional Council	Alice Springs
NPY Women's Council	Alice Springs
NPYWC	Alice Springs
NT Govt	Alice Springs
Regional Anangu Services	Alice Springs
Salt Bush NT	Alice Springs
Saltbush Social Enterprises	Alice Springs
Tangentyere	Alice Springs
Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Centre (TBC)	Alice Springs
Voyages	Alice Springs
Aboriginal Economic Inclusion Advisor	Bendigo
Access Australia Group Bendigo	Bendigo
La Trobe University	Bendigo
Yurringa	Bendigo
CVGT Australia	Bendigo
Castlemaine Community House	Bendigo
First Peoples Training Institute	Bendigo
Many Rivers Bendigo	Bendigo
GROW Greater Shepparton	Bendigo
City of Greater Bendigo	Bendigo
Indigenous Business Australia	Bendigo
TAFE	Bendigo
Victorian Department of Justice	Bendigo
City of Greater Bendigo	Bendigo
989 FM	Brisbane
ATISCHS Brisbane	Brisbane
Black Card	Brisbane
BNE Catholic	Brisbane
Brisbane South PHN	Brisbane
Broncos	Brisbane
CEA Group	Brisbane
Five Bridges	Brisbane
Inala Wangarra	Brisbane
Communities QLD	Brisbane
Department of Communities QLD	Brisbane
Dept of Communities QLD	Brisbane
DESE	Brisbane
DTIS QLD	Brisbane
Elephant in the Room Consulting	Brisbane
First Sun Employment	Brisbane
GCA Financial	Brisbane
Kalwun Development Corporation	Brisbane
Griffith University	Brisbane
HYIS QLD	Brisbane
Indigenous Elder Australian Army, Board Member University of Southern QLD	Brisbane
Services Australia	Brisbane
Ipswich Govt	Brisbane

Organisation	Roundtable
IUIH	Brisbane
IYS	Brisbane
JT Academy	Brisbane
Kambu Aboriginal Corporation	Brisbane
Krungunal	Brisbane
mindlebygul	Brisbane
Moreton Bay Govt.	Brisbane
Preston Campbell Foundation	Brisbane
The Learning Workshop	Brisbane
Titans	Brisbane
Your Town	Brisbane
North Regional TAFE	Broome
Broome SHS	Broome
Kullari Regional Communities Incorporated	Broome
Kimberley Development Commission	Broome
Kullari Regional Communities Incorporated	Broome
Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation	Broome
Shire of Broome - Tambellup	Broome
Broome Senior High School	Broome
VET, Careers & Workplace, Catholic Education Western Australia	Broome
WA Department of Communities	Broome
ADBT	Cairns
ATW	Cairns
TAFE QLD	Cairns
Cape York Employment	Cairns
RDATN	Cairns
Community Enterprises QLD	Cairns
CQU	Cairns
NAIF	Cairns
TMR	Cairns
DSATSP	Cairns
DSDSATSIP	Cairns
DSDSATSIP – PPO	Cairns
My Pathway	Cairns
Cairns Airport	Cairns
HVASC	Cairns
KAPANI	Cairns
First Nations Cairns Airport	Cairns
NJL	Cairns
NEATO	Cairns
Hopevale Aboriginal Shire Council	Cairns
My Pathway	Cairns
QAWN (AG Workforce)	Cairns
RRRC	Cairns
RRRC	Cairns
SDC	Cairns
TCICD	Cairns
TDB Consulting	Cairns
ALPA	Darwin
Local Government Association of the Northern Territory	Darwin
Tiwi Islands Regional Council	Darwin
Chamber NT	Darwin
Consultant	Darwin

Organisation	Roundtable
DESE	Darwin
NT Department of Chief Minister & Cabinet	Darwin
GTNT Group	Darwin
Larrakia Nation Development Corporation	Darwin
NLC	Darwin
Northern Territory Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation, NT	Darwin
NT Department of Chief Minister & Cabinet	Darwin
NT Department of Industry, Tourism & Trade	Darwin
NT Farmers	Darwin
NT Government, Aboriginal Development	Darwin
NT State Manager DESE	Darwin
Ironbark	Darwin
Tracks Indigenous Services	Darwin
Ventia Pty Ltd	Darwin
WISE employment	Darwin
YMCA	Darwin
YWNT	Darwin
Winun Ngari Aboriginal Corporation	Derby
Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation	Derby
DOHS	Derby
Emama Nguda	Derby
Winun Ngari Aboriginal Corporation	Derby
Bara Barang	Empowered Communities National
CYP	Empowered Communities National
FWCP	Empowered Communities National
ISEC	Empowered Communities National
Kaiela Institute	Empowered Communities National
NREC	Empowered Communities National
NYPWC	Empowered Communities National
Pama Futures	Empowered Communities National
WKFEC	Empowered Communities National
GNL	Empowered Communities NSW
HGT Aust	Empowered Communities NSW
NAISDA	Empowered Communities NSW
Nova Skill	Empowered Communities NSW
The Glen Centre	Empowered Communities NSW
Weekly Routine, The Glen Centre	Empowered Communities NSW
Yerin	Empowered Communities NSW
Coolgardie Aboriginal Corporation	Goldfields
Ngaanyatjarra Council	Goldfields
Shire of Ngaanyatjarra Council	Goldfields
Breakaway Aboriginal Corporation	Greater Western Australia
Diversity Team, Compass Group Australia	Greater Western Australia
LendLease	Greater Western Australia
Compass Group Australia	Greater Western Australia
Oaks Civil Construction	Greater Western Australia
Compass Group Australia	Greater Western Australia
ALC/Rangers	Groote Eylandt
CDC Angurugu	Groote Eylandt
CDC Umbakumba	Groote Eylandt
GEBIE	Groote Eylandt
Gem	Groote Eylandt
NT Government	Groote Eylandt
Yalu	Groote Eylandt

Organisation	Roundtable
Aboriginal Health Reference Group	Hobart
AFL SportsReady	Hobart
APM	Hobart
Brumby Hill Aboriginal Corporation	Hobart
Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills and Employment	Hobart
CVGT	Hobart
Education TAS	Hobart
Health	Hobart
Keen Partners	Hobart
Keystone Tasmania	Hobart
M Path	Hobart
Mission Australia	Hobart
Switch Tasmania	Hobart
TACINC	Hobart
Tasmanian Automobile Chamber of Commerce	Hobart
Tasmanian Building Group Apprenticeship Scheme	Hobart
Tasmanian Department of Communities, Office of Aboriginal Affairs	Hobart
TasWater	Hobart
Workskills Incorporated	Hobart
100+ Jobs MG Corp	Kununurra
KGT	Kununurra
SNIQE (?) (WA Gov)	Kununurra
VET, Careers Workplace (SMC)	Kununurra
KWAC	Kununurra
East Kimberley College	Kununurra
KGT	Kununurra
Waringarri Arts	Kununurra
Wunan	Kununurra
Axiom College	Mackay
Bowen Gumlu Growers Association	Mackay
CQUniversity	Mackay
Elton Services	Mackay
Glencore Coal Assets Australia	Mackay
Global Product Search	Mackay
Jangga Operations	Mackay
Mackay & Region Aboriginal & Islander Development Association	Mackay
Mackay Regional Council	Mackay
Max Employment	Mackay
Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network	Mackay
Queensland Department of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	Mackay
Yuwi Aboriginal Corporation	Mackay
BAC Enterprise	Maningrida
Gundjeimmi	Maningrida
Malala	Maningrida
Gundjeihmi	Maningrida
JKL	Maningrida
RD Chief Minister	Maningrida
Services Australia	Maningrida
NAC NRM Aboriginal Ranger Program, Geraldton.	Midwest
Yumagi Corporation Geraldton	Midwest
APM	Midwest

Organisation	Roundtable
Real Futures, CDP Program, Midwest	Midwest
Yulala	Midwest
ATSIP	Mount Isa
AWX	Mount Isa
DESBT	Mount Isa
DSDILGP	Mount Isa
Glencore Mines	Mount Isa
Kalkadoon Community	Mount Isa
Metz	Mount Isa
MMG	Mount Isa
Mona Aboriginal Corporation	Mount Isa
Mount Isa City Council	Mount Isa
Muyma/RGL	Mount Isa
My Pathways	Mount Isa
Accor	National
AI Group	National
COSBOA	National
CSU	National
Ingersoll	National
JA	National
Minderoo	National
NCVER	National
NESA	National
NFF	National
NIAA	National
NPYWC	National
Recaus	National
Retail	National
Retail	National
Ventia	National
Wes Farmers	National
Alpa/Bukmak	Nhulunbuy
Alpha CDP	Nhulunbuy
ALPHA Higher Ed Hubs	Nhulunbuy
Chamber of Commerce	Nhulunbuy
CM&C	Nhulunbuy
DEAL	Nhulunbuy
Dhimurru	Nhulunbuy
DIPL	Nhulunbuy
DITT	Nhulunbuy
EARC	Nhulunbuy
Gapuwiyak School	Nhulunbuy
Gomaty	Nhulunbuy
Gulkula	Nhulunbuy
Gumatj	Nhulunbuy
Laynha Homelands School	Nhulunbuy
LHAC	Nhulunbuy
MLA Mulka Office	Nhulunbuy
NEAL	Nhulunbuy
NLC	Nhulunbuy
RAC	Nhulunbuy
Rio Tinto	Nhulunbuy
TFHC	Nhulunbuy
Yirrkala School	Nhulunbuy
ACE Community Colleges	NSW North Coast

Organisation	Roundtable
Bularri Muurlay Nyanggan Aboriginal	NSW North Coast
Coffs Harbour Land Council	NSW North Coast
Corporation (BMNAC) Coffs Harbour	NSW North Coast
North Coast Development Alliance.	NSW North Coast
North Coast Training Services NSW, Lismore	NSW North Coast
Training Services NSW	NSW North Coast
Western Sydney University	NSW North Coast
ACAPS	NSW South Coast
Bega LALC	NSW South Coast
Corporate Connections	NSW South Coast
Dept Regional NSW Illawarra	NSW South Coast
DET NSW	NSW South Coast
Aus Govt Local Jobs Program	NSW South Coast
Govt Teams	NSW South Coast
Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation	NSW South Coast
More Sustainable Futures	NSW South Coast
Red Cross	NSW South Coast
Sea Arms	NSW South Coast
Shellharbour Mission Aus	NSW South Coast
TAFE NSW	NSW South Coast
Waminda	NSW South Coast
At Work Australia	Perth
Crown Resorts	Perth
DESE	Perth
DOJ	Perth
DPC	Perth
DTWD WA	Perth
Ebenezer	Perth
Elder	Perth
Finance WA	Perth
Job Train WA	Perth
NDIA	Perth
NM TAFE	Perth
Relationships WA	Perth
SM TAFE	Perth
Stratsys	Perth
Theiss	Perth
Transport	Perth
Wirra Employment Services	Perth
Wirrpanda	Perth
Ashburton Aboriginal Corporation	Pilbara
JP	Pilbara
AMYNOMS	Port Augusta
Complete Personnel	Port Augusta
DESE	Port Augusta
Kokatham TBC	Port Augusta
Local Jobs Program	Port Augusta
OZ Minerals	Port Augusta
RDAEP	Port Augusta
SA Govt	Port Augusta
SureWay	Port Augusta
TAFE SA	Port Augusta
Ventia	Port Augusta
AIMS	Rockhampton
Department of Education Skills and Employment	Rockhampton

Organisation	Roundtable
Choice Passion Life	Rockhampton
CQHHS	Rockhampton
CQU	Rockhampton
CQV	Rockhampton
DBS	Rockhampton
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	Rockhampton
Destiny Designed	Rockhampton
Regional Development Australia.	Rockhampton
JRT Group	Rockhampton
HY	Rockhampton
Kangalu	Rockhampton
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, QLD	Rockhampton
Neato	Rockhampton
Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, QLD	Rockhampton
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships	Rockhampton
Roseberry	Rockhampton
Transport and Main Roads QLD	Rockhampton
AYSA	Southwest/Great Southern WA
CLC AWA	Southwest/Great Southern WA
Impact Services	Southwest/Great Southern WA
Push Consult	Southwest/Great Southern WA
Roelands Village	Southwest/Great Southern WA
SA Corp	Southwest/Great Southern WA
Skill Hire	Southwest/Great Southern WA
Campbelltown City Council	Sydney
ALC	Sydney
APM Employment Services	Sydney
Apprenticeships International	Sydney
Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council	Sydney
Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council	Sydney
Yilabarra Solutions	Sydney
Crystal Parker	Sydney
Ability Options	Sydney
Global Skills Employment Services	Sydney
Global Skills Employment Services	Sydney
Community Junction Inc	Sydney
Aurora Education Foundation	Sydney
Asuria	Sydney
Jarraah House	Sydney
LinkUp, NSW	Sydney
Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council	Sydney
MatchWork – Indigenous Mentor	Sydney
MEGT	Sydney
Aurora Education Foundation	Sydney
NSW Transport	Sydney
Opportunity Hub, Campbelltown	Sydney
Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW	Sydney
Real Futures	Sydney
Recruitment Consultant	Sydney
APM Employment Services	Sydney
Marksoo	Sydney
APM Employment Services	Sydney

Organisation	Roundtable
TAFE NSW	Sydney
Tharawal	Sydney
TRANBY	Sydney
Tribal Warrior	Sydney
Weave	Sydney
Yarn'n	Sydney
Aboriginal Community Leadership Group	Tennant Creek
Aboriginal Corporations Leadership Group	Tennant Creek
Barkley Backbone Team	Tennant Creek
Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade	Tennant Creek
Group Training Northern Territory	Tennant Creek
National Business Development for Outback	Tennant Creek
Rise Ngurratjuta Employment Services	Tennant Creek
AgForce	Toowoomba
Carbal	Toowoomba
Goondir	Toowoomba
Goolburri	Toowoomba
DPC	Toowoomba
DSDILGP	Toowoomba
DSDSATSIP	Toowoomba
Education QLD	Toowoomba
Exceed 100	Toowoomba
GM Energy	Toowoomba
Goondir	Toowoomba
Harness Energy	Toowoomba
Inland Rail	Toowoomba
NDIS – Carers QLD	Toowoomba
Indigenous Health	Toowoomba
RD DESBT	Toowoomba
RDA DASW	Toowoomba
SWIN	Toowoomba
ABIS Community Housing	Townsville
Access Community Services	Townsville
Active One	Townsville
ATSWLSNP	Townsville
AWX	Townsville
BESIX Watpac	Townsville
CBD	Townsville
Cowboys	Townsville
CQU	Townsville
Defence	Townsville
DESBT	Townsville
DESE	Townsville
DSDATSIP	Townsville
DSDILGP	Townsville
DSDSATSP	Townsville
Feros Care	Townsville
Townsville Council	Townsville
Local Jobs Townsville	Townsville
My Pathway	Townsville
NAIF	Townsville
NEATO	Townsville
OCC	Townsville
On Community On Country	Townsville
ONA	Townsville

Organisation	Roundtable
PIASC	Townsville
Pimlico High	Townsville
PSDO DESBT	Townsville
RAQ	Townsville
Rural Trainers	Townsville
Seed Foundation	Townsville
Skill 360	Townsville
SLFA	Townsville
TCC	Townsville
Tec NQ	Townsville
Watpac	Townsville
YMC	Townsville
Yumba-Meta Ltd	Townsville
Chandler Macleod	Wagga Wagga
Charles Sturt University	Wagga Wagga
Compact Incorporated	Wagga Wagga
Connexions	Wagga Wagga
CVGT	Wagga Wagga
DESE	Wagga Wagga
Griffith City Council	Wagga Wagga
Industry Capability Network	Wagga Wagga
DESE	Wagga Wagga
Personnel Group	Wagga Wagga
Charles Sturt University	Wagga Wagga
NSW/Regional Aboriginal Partnerships	Wagga Wagga
Regional Development Riverina	Wagga Wagga
RMRA	Wagga Wagga
Dept. of Education	Wagga Wagga
Secure Energy	Wagga Wagga
Water Infrastructure NSW	Wagga Wagga
Shaw Employment and Training	Wagga Wagga
Summit Employment and Training	Wagga Wagga
TAFE NSW	Wagga Wagga
Three Rivers Regional Assembly	Wagga Wagga
Training Services NSW Dept. of Education	Wagga Wagga
Training Services with Rick	Wagga Wagga
TransGrid	Wagga Wagga
Transition to Work Personnel Group	Wagga Wagga
Youth Justice	Wagga Wagga

### **B15: List of National Roundtable Participant Organisations**

1. Accor
2. Australian Industry Group
3. Australian Retailers Association
4. Charles Sturt University
5. Council of Small Business Organisations Australia
6. Jobs Australia
7. Minderoo
8. Minerals Council of Australia
9. National Centre for Vocational Education Research
10. National Employment Services Association
11. National Farmers Federation
12. Reconciliation Australia
13. UTS Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research

14. Ventia/Broadspectrum
15. Wesfarmers

## Appendix C: Written Submissions Received

1. Jobs Australia
2. NORTEC
3. The Australia Institute
4. East Kimberley Job Pathways
5. Volunteering Australia
6. Latrobe Health Advocate
7. Mid-West Development Commission
8. Fifteen (15) Times Better
9. RISE Ventures
10. University of NSW, Sydney
11. Yalu Aboriginal Corporation
12. Kajarinya Training Organisation
13. Yilabara Solutions
14. National Accreditation Authority for Translators & Interpreters
15. Indigenous Land & Sea Corporation
16. Gumatj Aboriginal Corporation
17. WSP Australia PTY Limited
18. Macquarie University
19. Universities Australia
20. Jumbunna Institute, University of Technology Sydney
21. Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre
22. National Rugby League LTD
23. Real Futures
24. North Coast Aboriginal Development Alliance
25. Aboriginal Art Association
26. Advance Personnel Management
27. My Pathway
28. Generation One, Indigenous Employment Partners, and Wirrpanda Foundation
29. National Apprentice Employment Network
30. Indigenous Eye Health, The University of Melbourne
31. Indigenous Allied Health Australia LTD
32. [Permission not provided to publish identity of the submitter]
33. Minerals Council of Australia
34. Kimberley Group Training
35. The RAW Group of Companies
36. East Arnhem Regional Council
37. Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
38. Kapani
39. Halls Creek Shire
40. National Native Title Council
41. [Permission not provided to publish identity of the submitter]
42. First Nations Media Australia
43. The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation
44. [Permission not provided to publish identity of the submitter]
45. Aurora Education Foundation
46. Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation
47. Crown Perth LTD
48. Aboriginal Executive Council
49. Charles Darwin University
50. Reconciliation Australia
51. yourtown

52. Woolworths Group
53. Australian Institute of Marine Science
54. Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Empowered Communities
55. Kimberley Regional Group and Kimberley Zone
56. Reading Writing Hotline
57. NSW Aboriginal Land Council
58. Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
59. AFL Sports Ready
60. [Permission not provided to publish identity of the submitter]
61. National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
62. Tranby National Indigenous Adult Education and Training